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# THE WORKS

OF THE

# REV. ROBERT HAWKER, D.D.

LATE VICAR OF CHARLES, PLYMOUTH.

WITH

## A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

BY THE REV. JOHN WILLIAMS, D.D.

MINISTER OF STROUD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

IN TEN VOLUMES.

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# TRACTS.

PROPERTY OF
PRINCETON
THEOLOGICAL

# TRACTS.

## I.

THE GLORY OF GOD, IN GATHERING HIS PEOPLE TO HIMSELF, THE FIRST AND FINAL DESIGN OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

When the patriarch Jacob lay dying, he gathered his family around him, and under the unction of the spirit of prophecy, he delivered that memorable prediction, concerning our most glorious Christ: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be," Gen. xlix. 10. This was the *third* great promise in the charter of grace. The *first* is that proclaimed by the Lord himself, in the garden of Eden, immediately on the fall, and referring wholly to the person and salvation of our most glorious Christ: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," Gen. iii. 15. The *second* is that, made to Abram, the great father of the faithful, in which all the auspicious events of the Lord's high administration, respecting his church, is included: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," Gen. xii. 3. And that no possible misapprehension might be made of this promise, to whom it referred, the Holy Ghost was graciously pleased to give his own comment of it, by the ministry of Paul in his epistle to the Galatians: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made: he saith not, and to seeds as of many, but as of one; and to thy seed which is Christ." And to explain also yet further, the very persons interested

in it, towards the close of the subject it is added, " And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," Gal. iii. 16—29. And the *third* promise in the bible, is that, as hath before been noticed, delivered to the church under the divine gift of prophecy, by the patriarch Jacob. And the several bearings of it, though wrapped up in a comprehension of speech, yet so fully marked the prominent features of the person of our most glorious Christ, and the object for which he would come, as could not be mistaken. For he not only blessed the church in defining his character, but pointed to the time *when* —and to the church *where*— with the auspicious *effects* — which should distinguish his advent; " unto him shall the gathering of the people be!"

And when, from the dying chamber of the patriarch Jacob, we pass over a period of nearly seventeen hundred years, (for in truth, so much in the history of the church had run out from the days of Jacob to the coming of Christ in the flesh,) and we enter upon the subject, when the long predicted promise was actually fulfilled, and the glorious Shiloh come, we discover, with what a world of attention the Holy Ghost watched over the church, in directing the minds of the people of God to mark the confirmation of this prophecy. That almighty Lord the Spirit, as if yet more fully to explain and unfold the vast subject, both in reference to the person, and to the infinite purposes of his salvation, was graciously pleased to follow up this old testament promise by the ministry of the new testament dispensation; and thus more plainly develope therein the divine counsels. In the person of the Jewish high priest the Lord caused to be proclaimed afresh, the whole tenor of the dying patriarch's prophecy; and by the mouth of this man to point expressly to the person of Christ, and to shew, by what means he should accomplish salvation, and bring about the great purposes of

his grace, in gathering the people to himself. In the council convened by the chief priests and pharisees, to deliberate upon some plan for the accomplishment of the death of Christ, we read that "one of them, named Caiphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them; ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he, not of himself, but being high priest that year, he prophecied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad," John xi. 47—52. Here began to open in more pointed characters the substance of Jacob's prophecy. And this was the golden hinge on which hung the whole purport of Christ's coming; namely, that by his death he should procure the salvation of his chosen; which, when accomplished, "unto him the gathering of the people should be." Hence those memorable, and never to be lost sight of, precious words of our most glorious Christ: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me," John xii. 32. And how evident it is, that there is *that* in Christ which possesseth this powerful attraction. For if we see such properties in the magnet, that it fails not to draw all the filings of steel from amidst the rubbish of earth around; what may we not suppose that the Lord himself, who is the giver of that magnetic influence, can, and will do, in separating "the precious from the vile;" and drawing all his people unto himself, that "where he is there they shall be also?"

And as if all this was not enough, the Holy Ghost was graciously pleased to go further, in opening to the apprehension of the church the dying patriarch's prediction, and towards the close of the new testament records, to add another highly finished testimony of his own, and finally and fully give assurance of the cer-

tainty of this old testament promise. For when the Son of God had actually come, finished the whole work of redemption, and had returned to glory; by the ministry of his servant, the apostle Paul, the Lord the Spirit thus expressed the blissful events which should ultimately crown all: "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ; both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him," Eph. i. 10. This mighty him, this glorious Shiloh, was, and is, and everlastingly will be, the centre of all fulness; the source of all attraction: "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily: and ye are (saith the same scripture, speaking to the church,) complete in him," Col. ii. 9, 10.

I pray the reader to pause, if but for a moment only, over this statement. Let him consider that the whole is scriptural. And if he be taught of God, he must confess, that the Shiloh of whom Jacob prophecied, had a people. And the way by which they were to be designated was, their being gathered unto him. Hence the Lord Jesus Christ was to be made manifest, that he was, and is, the Shiloh, by the gathering of the people; and the people were to be known in that gathering: and by both, that divine testimony of holy scripture confirmed and fulfilled: "I will say, they are my people; and they shall say, the Lord is my God," Zech. xiii. 9. Very blessedly and beautifully hath God the Father spoken of him, and spoken to him on this ground. *First*, of him to the church: "Behold! I have given him for a witness to the people; a leader and commander to the people." Then the Lord speaks to him: "Behold! thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God; and for the Holy One of Israel, for he hath glorified thee," Isa. lv. 4, 5.

We shall enter into a more clear apprehension of

this subject in relation both to the divine glory, in the gathering of the people to our most glorious Christ, and the happiness of the people in being gathered to him; if we walk a few steps over the scripture ground, within that part of the sacred inclosure, where more particularly those precious truths, like the rich clusters of the vine abound, and were like the fruitful bough of Joseph by the well, " the branches run over the wall," Gen. xlix. 22. Let us *first* consider that which is indeed the first and leading cause of the whole; I mean, the divine glory, and observe that as all originates from hence, so all is directed to the same in the termination: " For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen." When we have gone over this part of the sacred ground, and that but in a few of the more prominent walks of it; we shall the better enter upon that department which relates to the people; to observe the designation of them, and how they are specially distinguished and known; and this will form the *second* branch of the subject. And as both these parts are, and will be illustrative of each other, so it will follow in the *third* object to be accomplished; that as the title-page of our tract expresses it, the glory of God in gathering his people to himself, is, and must be, the first and final design of the gospel ministry.

In speaking of the divine glory, which is the *first* branch proposed in our present subject to enter upon, we must be understood to speak of it under great limitations. For we know so little of Jehovah in his trinity of persons, as he is in himself, and as he is in his boundless manifestations of grace to his people, that we can have but very slender apprehensions of his glory. He is said to be " glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders," Exod. xv. 11. But while we read such ascriptions of praise, or hear them proclaimed, what can we conceive of those perfections, so

dissimilar as they are to our unholy, sunken, and degraded nature by the fall? As we therefore can form no just ideas of the divine glory, so much less can we of the being and essence of God. What that nature is, can be known only to himself. But if God will (as that he graciously condescended to will,) reveal himself to the spiritual apprehension of his creatures, this he mercifully doth by *effects*. Hence, while we are taught to contemplate that his being and existence is in a way peculiarly his own, and totally distinguished from all his creatures; namely, that in the unity of the divine essence there are three distinct persons, who come home endeared to our affections in the glorious, gracious names, of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; we here find somewhat to lean upon, in our apprehensions of God revealed to us in Christ. We now hereby enter into such views concerning Jehovah in his trinity of persons, as the holy scriptures have made known, and in the person of our most glorious Christ, can, and do, receive the blessedness intended from them. For while we are taught, that God in his essence, is "immortal, invisible, whom no man hath seen, or can see;" it is our mercy, that "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," John i. 18. Our knowledge therefore of Jehovah is in Christ. All revelations of Jehovah made to us are in Christ. And all we are, and all we everlastingly shall be, is in Christ. Hence the divine glory can only be known by us, as it is known in Christ; so then though with the scanty limits of our understandings, we can form no adequate conception of the divine glory, yet this we learn, and it is very blessed learning, namely, that the first, and principal, and leading object, which moved God to bless the church in Christ, was, and is, and everlastingly must be, his own glory. And here we arrive at a conclusion in what we cannot err, as it relates to the divine glory, namely, that in gathering

the church to Christ, his glory is more concerned in the accomplishment of it, than our happiness. For our happiness is the effect; his glory is the cause. And this is the greatest ground of comfort and encouragement that can be. I find it good upon every occasion to plead it before the throne, and tell God that my being gathered to him in Christ, will be my everlasting happiness: but much more his everlasting glory. Indeed our most glorious Christ is not only glorified when we are enabled to ascribe all praise to him for salvation, but he is glorified also when our nothingness and emptiness afford occasion for the display of his riches, and become vessels of mercy "to receive out of his fulness and grace for grace," John i. 16.

I proceed now to what was proposed under the second branch of our subject; namely, concerning the people, which were, and are, to be gathered to the Shiloh. And in order to enter into a clear apprehension of this point, which is of all others as it concerns our happiness, most indispensably necessary to be understood; I would here desire more particularly the attention of the reader.

The scriptures of God in every part, trace the history of the people, whom the patriarch Jacob predicted should be gathered unto Shiloh, up to the source in the everlasting love of God in his trinity of persons to the church. The origin of the people, as they were and are in Christ before all worlds, and as they will be in Christ when all worlds are done away, is always to be connected in one view, for the clear apprehension of the subject. Their designation as the people, implies as much. It is not a people, or any people at a peradventure, undefined or unknown; but the very identical people, which the Father from everlasting gave to the Son; whom the Son "betrothed to himself for ever," and undertook to redeem from the ruins of the fall, during the time-state of the church upon earth; and whom the Holy Ghost engaged to regenerate, and make

willing "in the day of his power." So that when the Shiloh was to come, and the gathering of the people was to follow that coming, all this arose, because "they were his people;" not to make them his people, for that they had from everlasting been, and nothing could make them more so to all eternity. The magna charta of grace had determined these things, in the ancient settlements of eternity. For the fall did not, because in fact it could not, do away the relationship between Christ and his church. The church of Christ was still the church of Christ, amidst all her foul, and filthy, and debased state of sin. The people that are now gathered to Shiloh, or in the generations yet to come, will be gathered to him; were and are as truly belonging to him before they are gathered, as they are after being gathered. Yea, the redeemed now in heaven, are not a jot more in the scale of relationship now they are there than when below. For under all the leprous condition to which sin hath reduced the church, Christ was and is, as truly her head and husband, as when originally chosen by the Father, she came up in the view of the divine mind, "holy and without blame before him in love," Ephes. i. 4. For as the sweet love song of Christ to his church expresseth it, "many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it," Song viii. 7; so could not all the cataracts of sin, which deluged the church at the fall, wash away the relationship to Christ, or the love of Christ, "who having loved his own which are in the world, he loveth them to the end," John xiii. 1.

But we must not stop here. As the church had thus her union with Christ before all worlds, and which must and will continue when there are no worlds, so the individual persons which constitute the one mystical body of Christ, though indefinitely named the people, are distinctly known and marked, and named, each by himself; and equally necessary to constitute the

whole when united together. It is most blessed to observe, how all the persons in the Godhead bear testimony to this most precious truth. They are said to be the Father's choice, and his own elect. Ephes. iii. 14; Luke xviii. 7; John xvii. 6—10; Ephes. i. 4. And our most glorious Christ is for ever harping upon this pleasant string, when speaking of the church. Hosea iii. 1—3; John x. throughout. And the Holy Ghost hath made them his own, by his unction from everlasting; and his inhabitation in their bodies, as his temple. Ephes. i. 8, 9; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. And the many relative characters, by which throughout the bible they are distinguished and known, is most blessed in point, by way of confirmation. "Surely, said Christ, (as he beheld them with his infinite complacency and delight,) they are my people, children that will not lie; so he was their Saviour, Isaiah lxiii. 8. "I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen," Isaiah xlii. 20. Sometimes they are called, Christ's seed, his spouse, his children, his fair one, his jewels, his portion, his inheritance, &c. And as the Lord of life and glory, delights to own them, so their joy is to own and delight in him. Hence the spouse in the Canticles, is for ever singing her love song to this note, which she makes the chorus of all her melody: "I am my beloved's; and my beloved is mine," Song vi. 3. And what I yet more particularly desire the reader to notice with me, is this designation of character in the Lord's people as Christ's own, is this; namely, that while throughout the sacred scriptures, they are indefinitely spoken of as the people, and the Lord's own people, and the like, as a phrase well known and understood; they are at the same time no less defined and identified, both by name and number. Hence their names are said "to be written in the Lamb's book of life," Rev. xiii. 8. And while the Son of God is said to call them all by name, as his

sheep, it is said of them, "that they shall all pass again under the hand of him that telleth them," Jerem. xxxiii. 13. A positive proof that they had all passed before. For both the original record of them, before the foundation of the world, in the Lamb's book of life, and the passing again under his hands for tale, to see that all are there, and none wanting, would be a superfluous service on the presumption that they are not personally and individually known and numbered as his people.

Let me only add one observation more under this branch of the subject, in which the Lord Jesus himself hath given a decided testimony, by which he saith his people are not only known by him, but are discoverable to themselves and others; and totally distinguished from them that are not his. "My sheep (saith Jesus,) hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me;" but to the rest he saith, "ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you," John x. 26, 27. And elsewhere, speaking on the same subject, the Lord Jesus said unto the unbelieving Jews: "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God," John viii. 43—47.

I have but one service more to perform according to my proposal; namely, to speak of the glory of God in gathering his people as the first and final design of the gospel ministry. Every ordinance, every means of grace, all the sacred institutions under the old testament dispensation, as well as under the new, however diversified, have but one and the same object, namely, "the gathering the children of God that are scattered abroad." It is the people of God that are to be gathered. It is the sheep of Christ that are to be sought after by the ministry of the gospel in all places where they have been scattered, in the midst of this dark and cloudy day.

And the Holy Ghost by the ministry of his servant Paul, hath very beautifully and blessedly shewn this as the great and leading design of our most glorious Christ, when having finished redemption-work, and being returned to glory, sent down his ascension gifts to establish a standing ministry upon earth. He describes the Son of God in that plenitude of power, as having "ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." And then is added: "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." Those various classes of servants are supposed to be sent on one and the same errand, all acting under the same unction of the Lord the Spirit; where all the gifts they have are from the Lord, and where the highest have nothing to boast of, nor the lowest any thing to be humbled for; for as in a large and complicated machine, the smallest wheel is essential to the operation of the whole, as the largest in the apparatus, so in the mysterious work of the ministry, the least of Christ's servants, when sent by him, have their special use in calling home Christ's banished ones to the arms of their Lord, as those of higher attainments. All are what they are, in Christ and from Christ; and all are "so to minister one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." But the principal part of this holy scripture, which the Holy Ghost hath given by Paul, remains to be noticed. When Christ gave these different degrees and orders in his church, for the service of the ministry, the Lord added what his divine pleasure was in those gifts to men, namely, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," Ephes. vi. 7—13. Now let these several parts of the service of the ministry be analyzed, and what do they

all with one concurrent voice declare, but the same as the prophecy of the dying Jacob? It is the saints that are to be perfected. It is the edifying the body of Christ, that is the work of the ministry. It is the gathering to our glorious Shiloh, the children of God that are scattered abroad. Our apprehension who they are that belongs to Christ, and who are not, the Lord in infinite grace and wisdom hath veiled from our knowledge, until that by sovereign grace the Lord is pleased to make them manifest. Hence therefore the command of Christ is to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Here is the sole province of man. The call of grace is the sole province of the Lord. The encouragement is great, for the Lord Jesus hath promised, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh I will in no wise cast out," John vi. 37. But the commission goes no further. For the Holy Ghost in this same scripture, which declares the service of the ministry is for "the edifying the body of Christ," adds that these services are to be continued, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;" that is, till the whole body, the church, is brought home to her glorious head and husband, until Christ is perfect in all his members. The fulness of Christ can admit no more than that fulness. Christ is one complete whole in this stature. And when this is perfected, all is perfected, to which nothing can be added, from which nothing can be taken. Christ is all, and in all.

The Gospel Tract Society takes its stand upon this fundamental ground of holy scripture. Following the steps of the apostle Peter, under the humble hope of the same unction as he had from the Holy Ghost, we desire to adopt the same language as he used, and as far as our province renders him imitable, we send our

tracts as he did his epistle, to strangers scattered throughout the various places where the Lord's people are, "Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. i. 1, 2. These are to be gathered; no other can be; the Lord himself hath marked the boundaries when he saith, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free," Gal. iv. 30. But while the scriptures with one voice concur in the declaration, that it is the gathering only of the people which can be brought to Shiloh; what a sole refreshing consideration it is that not one of the people shall be found wanting in the day when the Lord makes up his jewels. And who shall calculate the numbers, or mark down the account in the various parts of the earth, of the children of our most glorious Christ, which from age to age have been gathering, which now are daily gathering in places remote from each other, and where no means of grace or ordinances of the gospel have come? That multitudes of such will be found at the last day is evident from that blessed scripture, in which the Son of God hath said, "He shall send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of heaven," Mark xiii. 27. The church of our most glorious Christ, like the temple Ezekiel saw in vision, (whose dimensions of eighteen thousand measures larger than the habitable earth, could not mean any thing material) is realized in the spiritual building, which the Lord hath pitched, and not man. For wherever any of Christ's members are, the name of that city is Jehovah Shammah!

I only add, what a sight will that day open to the church of our most glorious Christ, when the gathering of the people shall have been completed; when all and

every individual member of his mystical body shall have been brought home to himself, and rising to the wonders of eternity, shall each form his part in this perfection in Christ Jesus. Then in the fullest sense of the word, will that scripture be fulfilled, in which it is said, "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously. And it shall be said in that day, Lo! this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation," Isa. xxiv. 23; xxv. 9.

## II.

### GOOD NEWS FROM A FAR COUNTRY.

From a far country indeed! For it is no less a distance than from heaven to earth. From the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God; to a world, which hath no continuing city, "but whose fashion passeth away!" And the remoteness from each other is not more contrasted, than are the manners, and customs, and employments, which distinguish the inhabitants of the different climates. For while the country which is far away, and from whence the good news comes, is a place of holiness and happiness; and the possessors of that blessed city are at the fountain head of everlasting life; the whole world here below lieth in wickedness and misery; and they that dwell therein are "in darkness and the shadow of death." And what tends yet more to enhance the greatness and preciousness of this good news from a far country is, that had it not been sent from heaven, it never could have been known upon earth. Never would it have entered into the mind of man, untaught of God, that there existed such things as have been related; much less such tidings of good would have been sent to him. And had the blissful intelligence been kept back, the whole apostate race of fallen, sinful Adam, must have remained in everlasting ignorance, and in their awful state of delinquency. Never then in this case could there have been left them the possibility of recovery. Never could any have lifted an eye of hope towards that upper and brighter world. Or if it had been beheld by any, still must it have been looked at as an inaccessible region! Oh the unspeakable felicity, when tidings first came from that blest country where God is truly known!

And what were and are the interesting particulars of this good news from a far country? What doth the gazette from the court of heaven, proclaim to the inhabitants of the earth? Nay, in answer it may be said, what doth it *not* proclaim, of every thing that be truly called good? To speak of it in a comprehensive way, as including all blessedness, it may be summed up as containing the whole charter of grace. For the charter of grace folds within its infinite dimensions, what in scripture language is named, "the mystery of God," Rev. x. 7. and "the mystery of godliness," 1 Tim. iii. 16. And when God himself hath developed to the election of grace the mysteries of his kingdom, there is discovered to the objects of his love, somewhat of the vast, illimitable, and unmeasurable grant, contained in the charter of grace. I said *somewhat*; for in the present twilight of being, even when enlightened by divine teaching, while we are here below, the most that we see and know, we behold only "as through a glass darkly." But the mighty bottom, the ground-work, the foundation on which the charter of grace rests, is most blessedly revealed by Jehovah himself in his trinity of persons; in which he hath made himself over in covenant engagements to the church to be their God for ever. The divine assurance is expressed in these words; "I will be their God, and they shall be my people," Ezek. xxxvii. 27. And as this sovereign grant comprehends in its infinite bosom all the other promises in the bible, which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus, so are they all rendered hereby everlastingly certain and sure. For they depend not either upon the will or deservings of man, but are all founded in the eternal purpose and good pleasure of God. And so vast and boundless are they, that Jehovah in his trinity of persons, hath taken an whole eternity for the manifestation of them. Yea, an whole eternity must run out, (if the term be war-

rantable) for the Lord's breaking up all the infinite magazines of his grace, before that the whole can be explored, and the unsearchable riches exhausted, which are contained in this divine charter. Such are among the blissful proclamations in this "good news from a far country!"

But it were to lose ourselves, and be swallowed up as in the Atlantic ocean, to contemplate the subject in one great whole. To enter into a scriptural and spiritual apprehension of the vast depth, by looking on the surface only, as far as the word of God guides us, we shall the better conceive what the immensity of grace must be, when under divine teaching we have discovered what those streams of grace we have already received now are, flowing from this eternal source, "which make glad the city of God," Ps. xlvi. 4. And as the Lord hath reserved to himself an everlasting duration for the display of it, opening to us in the present time-state of the church, and extending through all the ages to come; we shall do well to follow the footsteps of the Lord in this divine order; and as we walk on the skirts and shore of those unfathomable depths of grace, mark one by one the several tides of love, rising as they not unfrequently do, above high water mark, "to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. iii. 15.

If we were to trace the origin of this "good news from a far country" to its fountain head, we must look back into eternity. For the first dawn of revelation opens with the relation of events which took their beginning from thence. Yea, in very many parts of the bible of God we learn, that in respect to the church, the goings forth of Jehovah in his trinity of persons, "have been from of old, from everlasting." And in reference to those eternal transactions, then ordained to be in the future ages to come, the church was chosen in Christ, and had being in Christ, "before the founda-

tion of the world," Micah v. 2. Eph. i. 4. Hence the conclusion is evident; the present fallen state of the church, in the common ruin of our common nature in Adam, is not her original state, neither her final state, but only her intermediate and preparatory state, to her return, through the redemption by Christ, to the holiness and happiness in which she was chosen in Christ from everlasting. The "good news from a far country," therefore, while containing in its vast mail, all those blissful intelligences, unfolds by little and little, the wonderful events, which under the old testament dispensation were set forth by shadowy representations, to be explained in substance under the new. The holy scripture states this divine procedure with its usual sublimity of words, when saying, "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son," Heb. i. 1, 2.

But while it will be our mercy, as it is our interest, to have these glorious and momentous transactions of eternity always in view, as we attend to the revelation made to the church, in her present time-state of being, the "good news from a far country," opens to us with "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." Here, as in a focus, all the rays meet, which shine through the whole book of God. Here we discover the whole tendency of revelation centre as in one, which, through a period of four thousand years from the fall of man to the coming of our most glorious Christ, had been delivered through successive generations to the church. And here surely is the one of all the animating subjects to arrest and call up the most awakened attention of the redeemed of the Lord. It is very blessed to behold with what a world of apparatus, the Lord of life and glory was ushered in to his church. The prophets with one voice had prepared the minds of the Lord's people for the expectation of this mysterious event—

the advent of the Son of God in our nature. And as the time predicted by them for the accomplishment drew on, every eye was on the look out for the coming Saviour. Every heart whom sovereign grace had awakened to a sense of sin, was panting for his approach. Yea, of some we are told, "which departed not from the temple night and day, waiting for the consolation of Israel," Luke ii. 25—37. The very feet of them was declared to be "beautiful on the mountains, which brought those tidings of good, and that published salvation." And as if these were not enough in calling forth all the attention of men, angels of light who needed not for themselves salvation, having never sinned, yet, emulous to give glory to their Lord, and to shew their good-will to men, posted down from heaven, with the blissful tidings of the birth of the Lord Jesus, on the morning of his incarnation, and became the first heralds of this "good news from a far country," Luke ii. 8—14.

In the further prosecution of this subject, I must not venture to do more (indeed the limits of a tract will not suffer me) than merely to state the outlines. The whole which I shall be able to accomplish, can be simply but the smallest index to the infinite volume itself. It is to the holy scriptures the reader must look for the several contents of the "good news from a far country." Yea, and though in that sacred inspiration there given to the church, all the great truths abound; yet, unless divinely taught, he will have no spiritual apprehension in himself of their infinite importance. For it is a solemn truth, too firmly established in the word of God, and too long proved in the experience of mankind to be questioned, namely, that the knowledge of the mysteries of Christ's kingdom is not attainable by all the learning of mere human wisdom. That divine proclamation, how mortifying soever to the pride of man, stands as if placed

over the portal of the oracles of God. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things!" 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15. While therefore I humbly attempt to open before the reader some few of the more prominent contents, according to the statement of scripture, of this "good news from a far country," (for further, my province cannot extend) it will be both his interest and mine, to seek the divine teaching of "the Spirit of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God." The Lord hear and answer prayer for this blessing; that he may go before us, and guide us into all truth, as we enter the sacred enclosure; for then our researches in his word will not be "in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual," 1 Cor. ii. 12, 13.

In stating the outlines of this "good news from a far country," I have already glanced at the origin of the whole, in those ancient settlements of eternity, when in the counsel, will, and pleasure of Jehovah, in his trinity of persons, the church was "chosen in Christ to be holy, and without blame before him in love." I need not therefore observe more on this part of the subject, than just to remind the reader, that in the unceasing contemplation of this leading doctrine of our holy faith, all that follows in the blessings to the church in her time-state, find their sweetness. It is the infinite greatness of his Almighty Person, our most glorious Christ, which gives value and efficacy to all that he hath done, and is doing, and will eternally do for his people. And it is the original state of the church, as she was in Christ, and as she still is in Christ, (notwithstanding her present fallen and degraded condition) which gives confidence to receive and rejoice in

" the good news from a far country." The church, (by which I mean, the redeemed and regenerate church) loseth a thousand sweet, spiritual enjoyments, in losing sight of her original and eternal relationship. If a child of God, awakened by grace, was everlastingly to keep in view what scripture so plainly states how, and in what light, God the Father hath testified of his everlasting love to the church, when choosing her in Christ; and when in confirmation of that everlasting love, he gave her to his dear Son. And if the church was always connecting with this scriptural testimony, how God the Son beheld the church, and loved the church, when he betrothed her to himself for ever; and if taught by the same unerring standard of divine truth, the regenerated child of God always had in contemplation, how, and in what light, God the Holy Ghost testified his equal affection to the church, when anointing her as one with and in her glorious head and husband from everlasting. If, I say, these glorious and fundamental truths were impressed and interwoven in the spiritual mind and understanding of the regenerated child of God, here would be an everlasting resource for the most heartfelt joy; and the soul would then enter into a more enlarged apprehension of the blessed things contained in this and every divine proclamation of mercy. It is from the little acquaintance we have of those first and leading principles of our most holy faith, and the want of cultivating a more familiar knowledge of them, through divine grace in our souls, that even some of the Lord's chosen ones enjoy not more than they do, the glad tidings of the " good news from a far country."

If we now go on to prosecute the subject, and take it up from that part of the time-state of the church, when we behold her, according to the statement of holy scripture, sunk, debased, and degraded, in the Adam-fall transgression; what an awful change is here? She, that as " the King's daughter was all

glorious within; her clothing of wrought gold: Psalm xiv. 13. now in such circumstances of delinquency, and both in guilt and wretchedness, so lost, and helpless, and hopeless in herself, as no finite capacity, yea, even when spiritually taught of God, hath ability fully to fathom! But even then from hence ariseth a contemplation yet more to endear and appreciate this "good news from a far country!" For what vast volumes doth this good news contain in relation to this one great and momentous event, the church's recovery by grace? When we read in the sacred word, how incalculably great the salvation; how blessed and blissful the effects of that salvation, by whom it hath been solely accomplished; with what a word of sovereignty and power it hath been wrought; how eternally secure and unalterably fixed the partakers of it are, in a state of holiness and happiness beyond the possibility of any future change; Oh! what "glad tidings of good things; what great joy is here to all people!" The Son of God hath displayed his Almighty arm in this great salvation. He hath raised his church from the gulph of sin and misery into which she was fallen, and hath brought her back to her first, and original state of holiness and happiness in himself. He hath crushed with everlasting destruction, all her tremendous foes; and hath not only for ever "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, but hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through his gospel," 2 Tim. i. 10. Let any, and every truly redeemed and regenerated child of God, pause here, and calculate if he can, the innumerable blessings of this rich salvation! Indeed, who shall say what it must be, to be for ever freed from the burden of sin, from the guilt of sin, from the dominion of sin, from the unceasing terrors of sin, from the dread of punishment due to sin, from the self-reproaches of sin; yea, from the very being of sin, which now as a canker, eats into the very vitals of all our comforts. What name shall be found for the designa-

tion of such mercy, as brings deliverance from wretchedness so superlative, more expressive than "good news from a far country."

But we must not stop here. Infinitely higher views than even what concerns the church are opened to our contemplation in this charter of grace, when the Lord unfolds yet further, the knowledge of his Almighty person, by whom redemption is accomplished; and in the knowledge of him, is included the spiritual apprehension of, and communion with all the Persons in the Godhead; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The very mention of subjects so infinitely sublime and incomprehensible, even in the more transient and momentary view, dazzle the eye; though the eye be spiritualized and enlightened by grace. The mysterious union of the Son of God with our nature, the stupendous method in the substitution of himself for his church, in the transfer of our sins on him; "he who knew no sin, made both sin and a curse for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:" and yet in the very moment we contemplate these marvellous relations of holy scripture, we are equally taught from the same divine authority, that in the nature and essence of the Godhead, all divine perfections are his; underived, personal, and eternal! These revelations, loudly and decidedly proclaim, that his glory is the first and predisposing cause; the salvation of his church the effect. Hence the everlasting security of the church, which had for its prime object the divine glory. And hence the culminating point to crown all, and endear all, in this "good news from a far country."

One point more remains to be unfolded; and that, as it concerns every individual interested in this "good news from a far country," is among the sweetest notes in this spiritual song; namely, that all these blissful intimations from heaven come to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ upon earth, free as the light, "without money and without price!" There is nothing in the

highly favoured objects of this bounty to merit those mercies, but there is every thing in them, if demerit would disqualify to keep them back. But the whole is of free, rich, full, sovereign grace. And it appears, as though written with a sun-beam on the cover of the good news itself, that the Almighty Giver of those unspeakable blessings, hath never through the whole of them, had in view what man deserves, but what the Lord can give: not what they have done, or can do, but what sovereign grace can do, and will do, for his own glory, and their happiness. So that wherever this "good news from a far country" comes, and by whomsoever it is heard, if the tidings of salvation it brings be welcome to them, they are welcome to the Lord. Grace begins with the Lord, and it descends to man. If any man feels the need of it, this is a plain proof that the Lord hath created the sense of that need in his heart. For as the Holy Ghost saith upon another occasion, so the same doctrine holds in this, "If we love him, it is because he first loved us," 1 John iv. 19.

Shall I now pause, and ask the reader, whether he hath heard this "good news from a far country?" and whether it is indeed good news to his soul? The question is easily answered. Hath the reader felt the misery of a lost, ruined, and miserable state by reason of sin? Hath he tasted of "the wormwood and gall" of the Adam-transgression? and hath the cry ever issued from his heart, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. vii. 24. To all such, those tidings of good things will be, as life to the dead. Look at the effect of it in others. Figure to yourself a soul deeply depressed by reason of sin, and full of apprehension how to "flee from the wrath to come!" And let it be further figured to the imagination, that "this good news from a far country," was brought to him in an hour of deep soul-despair and wretchedness; and that the Lord

who gave this proclamation of mercy, gave with it the heart to receive the mercy and believe in it; and sounded through all the chambers of his conscience, the soul-reviving words, as in the apostle's sermon at Antioch to the sinners there, "unto you is the word of this salvation sent!" Acts xiii. 26. Think with what transports of rejoicing would such an one receive the joyful sound, and on his bended knees bless God "for his unspeakable gift!"

And why not you? The apostle Paul, who was himself a standing miracle of the riches and extensiveness of sovereign grace, hath left it upon everlasting record, that in whatever heart such grace was received it should be effectual. "This is a faithful saying, (said he) and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Surely, if it be worthy of all acceptation, then is it worthy of your acceptation, and of mine. Nay, Paul goes further and saith, that "it was for this cause he obtained mercy, that in me, (said Paul) first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." So then the grace shewn to Paul, was not simply to his own person, but it was that others from his example, might be encouraged to hope under similar circumstances for the like mercy. Well, say you, but what if my circumstances are not similar to the apostles? He perhaps never sinned as I have! Nay, hear what he himself saith, on that score. "I was before (saith Paul) a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious!" So that Paul stood charged in his own mind, and before God, not only for his own personal sins, but for being instrumental to promote the sins of others: not only a blasphemer of God, but a persecutor of God's people; not only sinning with an high hand himself, but injurious as far as his influence reached to make others sin also, and become injurious to the cause of God, and the cause of man. Notwithstanding all these things,

(said Paul) "I obtained mercy, that in me the Lord might shew forth a pattern to others. It is a faithful saying, therefore, (said he) and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," 1 Tim. i. 15, &c. So that "all acceptation" includes all cases, the most desperate cases, the most apparently hopeless cases; for our most glorious Christ is suited, divinely suited, to every case, and to every circumstance out of hell. What will any sinner argue more? No state is exempt. No situation of a trembling, awakened, fearful sinner is precluded. Our most glorious Christ is able "to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him." And what is the uttermost? Nay, the uttermost hath no boundary, that the horizon of sense, or even the imagination can form. For if there were a limitation, it could not be the uttermost!

But though there are no boundaries to the divine mercy, my paper of a penny tract, as well as my reader's indulgence are both exhausted. I would therefore close all with observing, that the few, (and they are but few) though grand truths, I have brought before the reader, are among the many, though not the thousandth part, of the "good news from a far country." And I shall not have laboured in vain, neither spent my strength for nought, if the few here enumerated shall prompt the reader under the Lord's teaching to regard those, and seek for more among the sacred pages of the scriptures of God. Do, my brother, I beseech you, turn from all the dying and the dead circumstances of time and sense, to the consideration of things of eternity and salvation. And while the world, and men of the world are for ever passing their time in unprofitable inquiries from each other, what news? let you and I be daily found studying and meditating under the Lord upon this divine science, and this only, "the good news from a far country!"

## III.

### THE ADOPTED CHILD.

It was a very blessed proclamation made to the church, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, by the apostle John, when from contemplating the unspeakable act of grace of Jehovah, in the adoption of the church to himself by Jesus Christ, he cried out, "Behold! what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" 1 John iii. 1. The very soul of the old disciple seems to have been on fire, even in the view of such rich and unparalleled mercy. John knew not how to express himself on the occasion. The love itself, the manner of that love, and the distinguishing nature of that love, all pressed together upon the mind of the hoary saint of God, that like Elihu, the spirit within him constrained him, that he was full of matter, and "as wine which hath no vent, he was ready to burst like new bottles!" Job xxxii. 18, 19.

The love itself coming from the whole persons in the Godhead. For though the apostle here speaks only of the Father, yet the Persons of God the Son and God the Holy Ghost are equally included in the grace manifested to the church in her adoption. For the same John, elsewhere speaking of the Son, refers no less the gracious work to him. "He was in the world, (said John) and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God!" John i. 10—12. And so intimately engaged was, and is, God the Holy Ghost in the Almighty gift of adoption, that the Lord the Spirit forms one of his revealed names on this very account, and is expressly called

"the Spirit of adoption!" Rom. viii. 15. So that Jehovah in his trinity of persons, is alike glorified in adopting the church.

And John felt inexpressible delight as he contemplated the unspeakable mercy from the manner of that love; "that we (said the apostle) should be called the sons of God!" It would have been a marvellous act of grace, when in our sunken, lost, and sinful state, had the Lord only pardoned us. And had God in infinite mercy, added to this unmerited pardon, the blessing of taking us again into favour; had he transformed us from sinners to saints, and changed our Æthiopian skin, to the purity in which Adam was first created, by washing us in the blood of Christ, those would have been marvellous acts of grace. But the manner of God's love would not rest here. His children shall not only be washed white in the blood of the Lamb, and be redeemed from "the bondage of corruption," they shall also be brought into "the glorious liberty of the sons of God; made heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," Rom. viii. 17. So that by this adoption, the church obtains a blessing unknown to angels. For there is not an angel in heaven that can call God Father. Whereas, there is not a sinner upon earth saved by grace, but what can, and ought; yea, he is commanded so to do. For thus we read: "But I said, (said God) how shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? And I said, thou shalt call me, my Father! and shalt not turn away from me! Jer. iii. 19. Thus by sonship, providing a method for overruling all objections, and removing all obstructions which sin and unworthiness had thrown in the way. Well might the apostle stand amazed at the wonderful works of grace, and exclaim, "behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!"

But John had not finished his admiration when he

had said this. The next volume in the mystery, called forth new surprize in the apostle's mind. "That we" (saith John) who are by nature and by practice, both by original and by actual transgressions, "children of wrath, even as others, that we should be called the sons of God. What then, are we better than they? No! in no wise, for God hath concluded all under sin." How marvellous the grace, that in the moment we were doing the work of Satan, wearing his livery, and expecting his wages, even eternal death, should be adopted into the household of God; and while meriting hell, should be made heirs of heaven. Well might the apostle stand astonished at such peerless grace. And well may you, and I, cry out with the prophet, "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth! break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel," Isa. xliv. 23.

Our tract is the subject of the Adopted Child! And when the child of God is taught of God, and his eyes are spiritually enlightened, "to know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in Christ;" no subject so sweet, or so interesting; for it takes within its bosom, every other in the manifestation of the divine love. Before that I enter upon it, I would pause at the threshold, and taking my reader by the hand, I would say as we open the door, if you are intent upon a subject of such infinite importance, and are desirous of being taught of God, which the promise decidedly declares, all the children shall be, Isa. liv. 13. John vi. 45. the subject is equally addressed, and is equally suited, both to saint and sinner; he that now knows by divine teaching of his adoption character, and he that by secret disposings from the Lord, (however unconscious at present from what direction those disposings come) desires it.

If you are of the *former* class, and are "passed from death unto life;" you cannot be ignorant of those features of sonship by which the children of God are known. Brought into the Lord's family, you are "no more a stranger and a foreigner, but a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone," Eph. ii. 19, 20. You are enrolled in the records among those "whose names are written in heaven." By your adoption character you are discovered to be of the "chosen generation, the royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; to shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darknes into his marvellous light," 1 Pet. ii. 9 You are brought by regeneration to look with different regard, and to esteem with different affection, to what you once beheld and valued, while in a state of unrenewed nature, the things of time and sense; for as one, whose views are now enlarged beyond the confines of a dying world, you are "looking for a city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God!" Hence your pursuits, customs, language, manners, are unaccommodating to, and distinguished from, men of the world. True indeed, the claims and affinities of natural life necessarily compel you to the employments of life; and the honest maintenance of yourself and family may prevent a total separation from the world. But in the midst of these unavoidable duties, the concerns and pleasures of all around you, appear to you but as the amusements and pursuits of children. You breathe the atmosphere of the earth, but "your conversation is in heaven." In a word, you are by the new birth, a new creature: "old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new!" Can the reader subscribe to these marks of character, (and which are scriptural) as his own? Then it will follow that he is the adopted child!

And if my reader be of the *latter* class, whose *desires* are awakened, but whose *enjoyments* do not come up to the *former;* let him not from hence conclude that he hath no part nor lot in this matter. There is "a set time to favour Zion," Ps. cii. 15. It was "the fulness of time," when Christ came, Gal. iv. 4. And it is "the day of Christ's power, when by the Spirit of the Son of God in our hearts, we cry, Abba, Father!" Ps. cx. 3.—Rom. viii. 15.—Gal. iv. 6. If you do not discover your sonship, do you long for it? If you cannot feel that longing for Christ, which marks the confirmed *saint*, do you feel that loathing of self, which marks the awakened *sinner?* Depend upon it self-loathing, and self-abhorring for sin, are never taught in nature's school. Moreover, the child by adoption is made wholly so, by rich, full, free, sovereign grace. The original choice of the church in Christ, had its place in the divine will before all worlds; so that nothing in the objects of that choice, either of merit or demerit, had any thing to do with the appointment. And it is the same now, in the time-state of the church. No worth or preparation on our part can in the least minister to the promotion of our adoption character. "The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people, as a dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men," Micah v. 7. It will be a very blessed testimony to the truth of God, if upon the present occasion the Lord should so graciously bless this little tract to the heart, both of saint and sinner, as in the conclusion, "the Spirit should bear witness to their spirits, that they are the children of God!" Rom. viii. 16.

I begin with observing, that the knowledge, or apprehension of our sonship, rarely opens to our view in the first dawn of divine life. Few, I believe, if any, when awakened to the concerns of eternity, and the salvation of the soul, have any conceptions of privileges so ex-

alted. When the Lord begins a work of grace in the heart, the whole cry of the sinner is, "how to flee from the wrath to come." The anxious question, which continually bursts forth within, and which like one tremblingly alive to the apprehension of merited punishment, echoes in his broken heart, as a voice when sounding reverberates from broken walls, "what must I do to be saved?"

And I pause for the moment to observe, the very gracious and tender method which God the Holy Ghost hath condescended to adopt, by this divine process of his love, John xvi. 8. Convictions of sin tend to endear Christ. And when the sinner is stripped to the very bone, hath nothing, confesseth he hath nothing, yea, knows himself to be worse than nothing; then, when God the Holy Ghost begins to open to his spiritual view, the glorious person and the finished righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ; what a ray of light, and life, and comfort, is at once poured in upon his soul! A world for Christ, yea, ten thousand worlds, if he had them, would the awakened soul then give for Christ, when by the Lord the Spirit he is brought to see him in all his beauty, fulness, and all-sufficiency. Here the gracious words of the Lord are confirmed: "See now, that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me. I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal!" Deut. xxxii. 39.

But in all this, most gracious and most blessed as it is, here is nothing said of our *adoption character*. In this school of divine teaching, it is evident the Lord hath brought all those that are thus far taught of their lost estate by nature; and they have learnt also, that our sole recovery is of grace. But the cause and origin of this boundless mercy is not in those things yet revealed to the awakened sinner. The Lord is leading him by the hand into the chambers of imagery, in his own conscience, Ezek. viii. throughout; and

shewing to him, that none but Christ can break to pieces the idols and stumbling-blocks of iniquity that are there. But the child of God hath several lessons more to be led through, before he is brought to trace his mercies to their source, and to discover that all originates in the everlasting love of Jehovah in his trinity of persons, given to the church by adoption in Christ, " before the world began."

Proceeding then by this gracious plan of divine teaching, and preparing the child of his love to enter at length into a scriptural apprehension of his sonship and adoption character, the Lord shews him, that he is not only pardoned, and " justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," Rom. iii. 24. but that in Christ he is provided with a robe of righteousness, and a garment of salvation, to appear in before God. Here the tender and divine Instructor begins to open to his wondering views, some of the more deep and mysterious prospects of the church's union *with* Christ, and her interest in all that belongs *to* Christ, as the head of his body the church, " the fulness of him that filleth all in all;" and thus enlargeth his spiritual apprehension, to the receiving " the things which are freely given to him of God." He can now subscribe, and doth subscribe, when brought thus far, with full consent of mind, to that precious, soul-refreshing, soul-supporting scripture, which saith, when speaking of Jehovah exacting all from Christ, as the head and surety of his church, that all his members might go free; " that he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21. And when this sublime view of salvation is received into the soul, from the gracious unction of God the Holy Ghost, it affords such unspeakable satisfaction, as enables the believer to triumph over all the foes of his salvation, " rejoicing in hope of the glory of God."

At length the gracious Lord leads up his scholar to the fountain head of spiritual apprehension, as far as faith can go in the present twilight of knowledge, (until faith herself is lost in absolute vision,) and by unfolding that marvellous grace of the mysterious union of Christ with his church, and the church with Christ, and Christ in God; opens, and keeps open, a perpetual source of scriptural and spiritual delight, in the endless subject of our adoption character; by which we discover somewhat of those vast and eternal privileges, which testifieth of Jehovah's purpose, counsel, will, and pleasure, of grace to the church in Christ from everlasting to everlasting.

In speaking of adoption, recourse hath been sometimes made, by way of explanation, to the usage not unfrequent in life among men. Yea, the scriptures themselves have shewn instances where the custom hath been observed; that of Pharaoh's daughter adopting Moses," Exod. ii. 9.—Heb. xi. 24 to 26; and again, that of Mordecai adopting Esther, Esther ii. 7. But these cases, can in no instance whatever find any parallel to our adoption in Christ. For, however among great personages of the earth, adopting children from among the poor for their own, from which they differ in worldly circumstances, the nature of both is the same. But in God adopting children from among men for his own, here is the Almighty Potter taking into union with himself of the clay of his own creation! And for the purpose of this union and adoption, certain it is, that one of the Almighty persons in the Godhead actually took our nature into union with himself; for "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us!" John i. 14. But the subject is too deep, in this part of it, for our present scanty line to fathom. Like the holy waters in the prophet's vision, though when entered, while rising "to the ancles, to the knees, or to the loins, they may be waded through, yet when be-

coming a river, we cannot pass over;" our place of safety therefore, must be like his, "to return to the brink," Ezek. xlvii. 1 to 6.

Mysterious as the subject is, (and Jehovah in his trinity of persons hath appointed an whole eternity for the study of it) some very blessed views, we may, by supernatural discoveries to us take, on the brink of the river, "the streams whereof make glad the city of God," Ps. xlvi. 4. And the first, in the highest and the best degree of the subject, is that which shews each glorious person in the Godhead hath engaged in it. God the Father, "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," Eph. iii. 14, 15. hath manifested his gracious acts in the deed. He is said "to have predestinated the church unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved!" Eph. i. 5, 6. And God the Son hath equally taken part in the gracious transaction, for by marrying the persons of his people, his Father is our Father; and by assuming our nature, we become sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, and we are Christ's brethren, Ps. xlv. 10.—Heb. ii. 11, 12. And God the Holy Ghost, when from everlasting anointing the church in Christ, and by "the washing of regeneration," and the effectual calling of the church, in every individual person in time, gives witness to their adoption character, "that they are sons of God," Rom. viii. 15, 16.—Gal. iii. 26.

But we must not stop here. While we are thus graciously led by the Lord himself, into these most blessed, soul-satisfying testimonies, to the persons, and grace, as concerning our sonship in Christ, "of the three which bear record in heaven, and these three are one!" 1 John v. 7. we are further taught, somewhat of the outlines of this mysterious subject of grace, from discovering the infinite connection between the original

purpose of the divine will, when the church in all her members was so " predestinated, before all worlds," to the adoption of children, and the actual *receiving* of that sonship in *time*, when, by the outpouring of the Spirit each individual is brought to cry, " Abba, Father!" The Holy Ghost in *one scripture*, dates the pre-determination of the event; and in *another*, declares the accomplishment. And marks the *latter* with special and peculiar emphasis, as being done both for the confirmation, and the actual receiving the unspeakable mercy, by the highly favoured objects of it. For thus the sweet scripture expresses it: " And because ye are sons, (not to make them sons, but because they are so, by original and eternal designation) God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father!" Gal. iv. 6. And here do not fail to observe also, how the whole three persons in the Godhead are brought to the testimony of the blissful doctrine, as if combined in one, to set seal to the mercy.

Yea, to go further. This relationship, this adoption, this choice in Christ, this acceptation in Christ; these everlasting, spiritual, and eternal blessings in Christ; as nothing in the creature prompted to such acts of grace from the infinite Creator, so nothing can arise to counteract or frustrate the continued effects of the same to all eternity. Once sons of God, the church in her millions of beings are always sons. Nothing during the Adam-state could arise to make void the sonship. Though the natural enmity of our heart, induced by sin, would estrange, and hath (until subdued by grace) estranged our affections from God, yet not God from us, Jer. xxxi. 3. " He is in one mind, and who can turn him!" Job xxiii. 13. Even among men, in their connections and relations with each other, nothing destroys the affinity, whatever changes take place in their affections! My son, or my daughter, is still mine, whatever places they are in, or whatever distance removed to from me. And if one of a family becomes

poor, and another rich, however the one may look shy upon the other, the relationship holds good ; and as we say, all the water in the ocean cannot wash it away. How much more with him, who saith himself, " I am the Lord ! I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed !" Mal. iii. 6. And very blessedly hath the Lord himself assured the church of his unalterable affection, under this same character of his children, when in the close of all he will come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. " And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels ; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not," Malachi iii. 17, 18.

And now, what is the result of all that hath been said ? Doth the reader enter into an apprehension by divine teaching of what are the features of the Lord's adopted family ? And is he satisfied by those features that he himself is an adopted child ? I need not run over the land-marks again, which have been set up as we have gone on through the several parts of this little tract. Indeed, the limits of a work of this kind will not admit of it. The quickening of the sinner by the new birth, from being " dead in trespasses and sins," to a life of faith in Christ, (which is the sure prelude to the enjoyment of our adoption character) is such a mighty act of grace, and works so vast a change in every soul who is the object of such distinguishing love, as cannot be unknown, or unfelt, or unenjoyed by any one, who is made the happy partaker of it. If the Lord hath passed by (as is graciously described in the motto of the title-page of this little tract) and looked upon you, when cast out to perish, when there was no eye to pity you, nor to do any thing for you ; and if the time of *your misery* was the time of *his mercy ;* and if the Lord spread his skirt over you,

covered you, clothed you, sware in his love to you, entered into covenant with you, and said, " thou art mine!" If these sovereign acts of grace have been bestowed upon you, and you that were once afar off, are now brought nigh ; and from once living " without God, and without Christ in the world," are now " followers of God as dear children ;" will you not behold in these sure and unerring scriptural testimonies, evidences of your sonship? The Holy Ghost by Paul declares this, for it is said, that " as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," Rom. viii. 14. And God the Father hath, in another scripture, drawn the character of the adopted child, when saying, " Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth !" Jer. iii. 4.

Suffer me only to close these observations with one or two interesting particulars belonging to the subject, as among the privileges of the adopted child. *First.* As no merit, no preparation, nothing of deservings on our part, became the least recommendation, or had any thing to do with the original purpose of adoption, which arose wholly from the counsel, will, and pleasure of Jehovah in his trinity of persons before all worlds; so the persons adopted are all equally adopted, all equally beloved, all equally chosen. There may be (as in a family among men, of different ages and stature) a diversity of attainments, and a diversity of stations, as the Lord in his providence shall be pleased to place his adopted children; but there is no difference in his love. The little ones are as dear as the great ones. The smaller boughs on a tree are as truly belonging to the tree as the loftier branches, yea, and as much nourished by the root, and sap, and moisture of the tree, one as another. Let every adopted child never lose sight of this. It will give him comfort under a thousand exercises he may meet with in life. Blessedly the Holy Ghost puts his almighty seal to this doctrine, when saying to the church, " Ye are all the children of

God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus," Gal. iii. 26 to 28.

*Secondly.* The subject of adoption, and the well-grounded assurance of being an adopted child in the Lord's family, amidst the very many and great blessings it gives to all, hath special mercies folded up in it for constant use to all the poor and friendless of the Lord's family in the world. For as it is to the want of this adoption in Christ, multitudes among the rich and great are miserable in the midst of all; so on the other hand, from the possession of it, the poorest of the Lord's adopted ones cannot be truly unhappy, be his outward circumstances what they may. And it is this which solves the riddle the history of mankind is putting forth from day to day, wherefore there are so many aching hearts in fine houses, while numbers are so happy in the humblest habitations, and not unfrequently in the scantiest provision of bread. This solves the problem. The *former*, having nothing but this world's good, have a vacuum the world cannot fill. The latter, having Christ in their adoption by the Father, the Holy Ghost brings forth the enjoyment of it daily, and hourly, to their spiritual apprehension, and this affords a sweetness which sanctifieth all.

I love to close all my poor services with questioning, what savour of Christ hath accompanied them? what testimony of the Spirit hath witnessed to them? If an unction from the Lord be upon the present occasion in the use of them, perhaps the reader will feel his mind led out with mine in praise to God, in adopting the words of the Holy Ghost by John, with which I *begun* this tract; and making them the subject for blessing God now in the *close* of it! Blessed be God, in the unity of his divine essence and trinity of persons, for the united love of the holy Three in One to his church

in Christ from everlasting. Blessed be the Lord for the manner of that love, in God the Father's adopting the church as children to himself in Christ Jesus, that we should be called the sons of God! Blessed be God the Son, whose manner of love hath been so graciously manifested to us, as to have united us to himself, and to have given himself for us, "an offering, and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." Blessed be God the Holy Ghost, whose manner of love hath been shewn, that "when dead in trespasses and sins" by nature, he hath quickened us by grace, and by "the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of his almighty power, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; being justified by his grace, we are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." And blessed be God that the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. We are indeed as a wonder unto many; yea, a wonder to ourselves. Here again, Lord, we find renewed cause of thanksgiving, in that our adored Lord hath taught us to expect these things, when he said, "Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel, from the Lord of Hosts!" Now, Lord, we are the sons of God! Here we enjoy our adoption character by faith. And when thou shalt take us home, we shall enjoy our sonship in open vision in glory. Blessed be our God, we know, that though it doth not yet appear what we shall be, nothing in this dying, sinful world, affording similitudes to represent divine things by; yet when our God and Saviour shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is! The glory of thy person, Almighty God and Saviour, will constitute the whole blessedness and happiness of heaven! And the everlasting contemplation and enjoyment of it, will be our heaven of heavens for evermore. "We shall behold thy face in righteousness, and be eternally satisfied when we awake with thy likeness." Amen.

## IV.

### VESSELS OF MERCY, AFORE PREPARED UNTO GLORY.

"He shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."—2 Tim. ii. 21.

There is somewhat very expressive in the title:—'Vessels of Mercy.' For what is a vessel? Nay, it can be no other than a mere receiver. For the very designation of it is to this office, and to this office only. It is pre-supposed to be formed for this purpose, and no other, having nothing in itself; and, after all, can have nothing more than what it receives. And what can more aptly be chosen to represent the church of Christ? she is a vessel indeed unto honour, when sanctified and made meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work; but in herself still only a vessel to receive. "For," as the Holy Ghost by Paul unanswerably reasons, "who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" 1 Cor. iv. 7.

Let us pause for a moment over this view, and ask the question, who in the congregation this day, can be fitted to receive, but such as are vessels for that purpose? Nay, who among the vessels is likely to fare best, but he that is most empty in himself, and is come here under a sense of need, "to receive out of Christ's fulness, and grace for grace?" John i. 16. To this end speaketh the Lord, "When the poor and the needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst; I the Lord will hear them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them: I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the vallies; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water," Isa. xli. 17, 18. And it is very blessed to see how exactly suited our most glorious

Christ is in himself, to fill the empty vessels of his people. The more dry they are, the more they are made sensible when receiving out of his fulness. It is not unsimilar to the thirsty earth, when parched by long drought. You must have seen the effect which immediately takes place at such a time, after a shower of rain, which is soaked in by the ground, making the whole refreshed and saturated. Hence it is said of our most glorious Christ, "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth," Ps. lxxii. 6. Hence his gracious love-call to his people in the days of the prophet: "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price," Isa. lv. 1. And in person, the Lord of life and glory followed up the same gracious invitation to the thirsty soul, when in the days of his flesh Jesus stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink," John vii. 37. And as this was delivered by the Lord in his last public sermon, the last great day of the feast; so when he sent his angel to testify these things, and to close in the final words of scripture, until his second coming, the same is repeated: "And the Spirit and the bride say, come; and let him that heareth say, come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, (whomsoever the Lord hath made willing in the day of his power) let him take of the water of life freely," Rev. xxii. 17. And very sure I am, that the more a soul feels his need of Christ, as an empty vessel, the greater will be his supply from this almighty fountain of living water. And though all that are longing for Christ shall be supplied by Christ; (for as Mary in her love-song said, "He filleth the hungry with good things, and it is the rich only he sends empty away," Luke i. 53.) yet that precious soul shall be first fed that is most famishing; first have his vessel filled that is most empty; the poorer

the sinner, made sensible of his sin and poverty, the welcomer here. Well, therefore, are the Lord's people called vessels, since they have nothing but what they receive.

But we must not stop here. The church is not only said in all her members to be vessels, but "vessels of mercy." And there is a vast sweetness, as well as great blessedness in the expression, when by regeneration the Lord hath brought us into a real scriptural and spiritual apprehension of the meaning. For mercy, strictly and properly speaking, can be shewn only to the miserable. God might, and God did indeed, love the church in Christ, before he called them into actual being in themselves, Jer. xxxi. 3. And God is said to have given grace to the church in Christ Jesus "before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9. But I speak with reverence when I say, the church could not have been called "vessels of mercy," had she not before, by the Adam-fall transgression, been the object and subject of misery. And this divine attribute of Jehovah, hath no other occasion for exercise but upon the miserable. Mercy is a perfection solely for manifestation in this way. All the other divine properties find opportunity for numberless displays of them; "God is love." God loves himself in his trinity of persons. God's riches of grace in making the church to be accepted in the Beloved: this is said to be to the "praise of the glory of his grace." Eph. i. 6. But God cannot be said to be gracious to himself, or merciful to himself. Mercy is solely for the miserable. Hence it is said by the prophet, that "he delighteth in mercy." Micah vii. 18. Yes, he saith himself, when calling upon the church to the contemplation of it, that he delighteth in it; and calls upon his people to delight in it also: "Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he under-

standeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord," Jer. ix. 23, 24. You see, therefore, that the church is not only a vessel, considered as a mere receiver; but a vessel of mercy, needing daily mercy, as we need our daily bread; and I hope that the Lord hath brought both you and me, at this time, before his divine majesty, under a sense of both; and that as he knoweth every care and every want of his people, and hath a suited mercy for you, for me, and for all that feel their need of him; his gracious voice may be heard by the ear of faith, and his power felt in the believer's heart, when he saith, "Let Israel hope in the Lord, for in the Lord there is mercy, (even Jesus, the mercy of mercies) and with him is plenteous redemption; and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities," Psalm cxxx. 7, 8.

We shall be the better prepared, under divine teaching, to enter upon the subject proposed for our meditation in this tract of "vessels of mercy," by previously observing how the apostle hath introduced it; in a verse or two preceding the statement concerning "vessels of mercy," the apostle had been speaking somewhat largely of God's sovereignty, according to his own declaration of it to Moses; and Paul made a quotation from that scripture, Exod. xxxiii. 19. where the Lord asserted his just prerogative to the exercise of the same. For he saith to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion;" and Paul foreseeing that this would excite the indignation of all natural men, the apostle took occasion to assert therefrom, the unquestionable right of God in the exercise of this power; and for the better confirmation of the doctrine, he adopts a very familiar mode of illustrating it, in the well-known character of the potter, who, in moulding or shapening his

vessels in whatever way or manner pleased him, had no resource to the opinion of others, his own judgment being the best standard; "Hath not the potter (saith Paul) power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour?" To be sure he hath. And who ever doubted it, or called in question this man of the earth, whose clay and himself are alike of the same materials, dust? And shall the God of heaven then be arraigned at the bar of his creature's tribunal, for exercising an authority which all the world, without reluctancy, give to the maker of potsherds, when such an infinite dissimilarity of being marks the Creator from the created? And from this unanswerable statement, the apostle advanceth to another equally unanswerable, and which carries conviction with it against all objections, "What if God (saith Paul) willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction? and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory; even us (said Paul) whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles," Rom. ix. 21—24.

Let us not dismiss this scripture, until that we have marked one or two of the leading particulars of it. God hath authority surely to shew both his wrath and his power on the vessels of wrath. But the apostle is here stating his long-suffering in enduring with forbearance the execution of his justice on "vessels fitted for destruction." For when men that are ripe for ruin, full of evil to the brim, and like a vessel laden with inflammable materials, ready to ignite with a spark, need but to be touched to be blown up with an explosion; is it not long-suffering, the suspension of the merited punishment day by day? Are they filling up continually their measure of iniquity, and

treasuring up to themselves " wrath against the day of wrath;" and is it not great long-suffering in God that they are not cut off? Nay, are not thousands and tens of thousands receiving at the Lord's hand innumerable blessings, who, in return, only " cause him to serve with their sins, and weary him with their iniquities?" Is not this great long-suffering in the righteous Lord " who loveth righteousness?" I have often thought, if persons of this complexion had the power to pause over their awful situation; if after the midnight revel, or the visiting haunts of licentiousness, the wretched character, when awakening to the morning light, could but put the question to himself, and say, wherefore is it that the Lord hath spared me to this hour, and the dawn of a new day opens upon me? Can this forbearance be ascribed to any other cause than the Lord's long-suffering? They of the Lord's redeemed ones, who can and do trace the recovery by grace to this divine forbearance, will need no intimation from me, how much they are debtors to the Lord on this score. They can and will appreciate somewhat at least of his mercy, " who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust," Matt. v. 45.

But passing away for the present the consideration of what this scripture hath stated, in relation to " the vessels of wrath;" the purport of this little tract is intended to treat, and on scripture ground, concerning the " vessels of mercy." The apostle, in his divine way of reasoning, taught by the Holy Ghost, draws an argument from the former, the more strikingly to prove the latter. " What (saith he) if God willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction;" shall he not do it? " shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Gen. xviii. 25. In like manner shall he not demonstrate no less his

grace; "and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory. Even us (saith Paul) whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles." The words themselves are very blessedly formed into those three distinct branches in relation to those "vessels of mercy." The first and chief (and which must indeed be everlastingly so in all the dispensations of the Lord to his creatures) is the divine glory. It is to make known the riches of God's glory for which they are vessels of mercy, and for which "they were afore prepared unto glory." This, therefore, as it is the pre-disposing cause of all, it will be our wisdom, under the Lord's leadings, first to consider. The second branch of our subject, will then come within its proper province to notice; namely, "vessels of mercy;" and particularly that they are such, because they were fore-ordained to glory. And when we have gone over this part of the subject, it will form a matter of no small interest to examine the third, namely, of the *us* Paul speaks of, who are the objects of such divine favour, whether Jew or Gentile, being the "called of God." And it will be a very blessed application of our time, if the Lord's presence shall be in our midst, to give us a true spiritual knowledge of these rich mercies in Christ. To discover that we are vessels of mercy, being afore prepared unto glory, exceeds the highest calculation we can in the present time-state conceive of happiness. For this is what the Lord called upon his disciples to rejoice in, that "their names are written in heaven," Luke x. 20.

And in order for your better apprehension, under divine unction, of this soul-comforting truth, I would have you enter upon it with the humble hope, that as Paul in his sermon before the people at Antioch declared, that "whosoever among them feared God," were interested in what he had delivered; so the same

may be said among all God-fearers now ; " to you is the word of this salvation sent," Acts xiii. 26. Methinks I would have the blessed truth proclaimed in every place of concourse where the ordinances of God are observed, that Jesus is always present to fill the vessels of mercy in all who are made sensible of their emptiness. And I would have it yet further proclaimed, that a sense of need is the only qualification for receiving. The bountiful Lord, as he wants nothing from the objects of his bounty, so there is nothing that they have to give, or that the Lord can receive. His grace finds vent, when from his fulness he pours into their emptiness; and while they are made happy, his riches hath the end in the bestowing of them. It is not what the objects of misery can do for him ; but what he can and will do for them. And yet more. I would have it yet further considered, that as we are vessels of *mercy*, and not *sacrifice*, all that are receivers are by their very state and circumstances beheld as passive in receiving. There are no preparations, no worth, no merit, no deservings. The generous Lord gives with a full, free, and open hand. And above all, as if to remove every doubt and every fear from the mind of the miserable who feel their poverty and long for mercy, the Lord declares, that his glory is more concerned in the salvation of his people, than any of them can be for themselves. The word saith, that it is " to make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory !" What then is wanting to recommend the gracious doctrine concerning what this little tract is directed to treat of? Thy sovereign grace only, O Lord ! for in this we have the whole power of persuasion ! And if the Lord God of the prophets will mercifully do in the present day, as he influenced the mind of his servant Elisha the prophet to do in his, to the poor widow, when commanding her to bring empty vessels, and not a few,

which supplied her need in filling from the cruse of oil, which failed not while she had any to fill; what may we not hope our God himself will do to supply every needy one whom he hath made sensible of his misery by sin, and is come to ask supply from him who is the head of his body the church, "the fulness that filleth all in all." Sure I am that while there is one such empty vessel to fill, the oil of his grace will not fail; yea, every vessel shall be filled, and the infinite ocean that is in himself shall remain undiminished; for however we fail, his compassions fail not. He is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

I begin according to my proposal, in speaking of the vessels of mercy, with that first branch of the subject, which is and must be in this (and indeed in every other) the bottom and topstone of all things; namely, the object of all the divine glory. The words of this scripture so speak, "that he might make known the riches of his glory." And this is so plain and clear, that though the highest in importance to every other, yet requires the least in point of reasoning to insist upon. This was the burden of the song John heard in vision, among those who rested not day and night, to proclaim the sovereignty of Jehovah; "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created," Rev. iv. 8—11.) And very eminently is this glory manifested in the infinite grace shewn to the church in our most glorious Christ. For in him, in the blessed manifestations made personally to the church, all the divine attributes find display. And in the fore-ordination of those which become vessels of mercy in time, because they were chosen in Christ to glory before all time; here is the richest and fullest demonstration of it. Jehovah in his trinity of persons is here, and here only known. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten

Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," John i. 18. So that in this most glorious Christ we know the Father, we have seen the Father, John xiv. 7, 9. And Christ, as the visible Jehovah, manifesteth the whole according to this his own statement, John xiv. 10, 11. All the purposes of the Holy Three in One, are concentrated in him, Eph. iii. 11. In his Person there is a full constellation, like that beautiful cluster of the heavenly bodies in the south, Job xxxviii. 31. which we call the seven stars, which give lustre in one full blaze of glory. Hence his praise is blessedly described in the Psalms. "His glory is great in thy salvation; honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him: for thou hast made him most blessed for ever," Ps. xxi. 5, 6. I stay not to observe at this time how each glorious person hath taken part in the vast purposes concerning the church; it will be enough to remark, that as the vessels of mercy were fore-ordained to glory, evidently this arose from those ancient settlements of eternity, in which the personal love of the Father was declared in naming them in Christ, Eph. iii. 14, 15; the personal love of God the Son in betrothing them to himself, Isa. liv. 5; Hosea ii. 19, 20; and the personal love of God the Holy Ghost, in anointing them in Christ before all time, and giving them the earnest of the promised inheritance, 2 Cor. v. 5.

But this eternal fore-ordination to glory, being founded in the joint favour and love of the Holy Three in One, most decidedly shews the safety and security of it. For there could be no peradventures, no obstructions, no impediments which the same divine wisdom which fore-appointed to glory, had not foreseen to guard against, that nothing might arise to counteract the ordination of eternity. The divine glory stood engaged for the accomplishment; and in the person of our most glorious Christ, every efficiency was found to render the whole

secure. And the church being now in time made vessels of mercy, not only were made so because they were fore-appointed to glory; but in this marvellous way hereby the riches of glory became more conspicuously displayed, both for the salvation of the church, and the greatening and exalting the person of Christ.

And to add no more. The grand point to crown the whole, is chiefly manifested in that the everlasting blessedness of the church, and the holiness and happiness of the church being founded in Christ, is preserved in Christ; and as she was fore-prepared for glory when chosen in him before all worlds; there is no possibility of being otherwise than holy and without blame before God in Christ, when there are no worlds; because it is not what the church is in herself, but what she is in Christ. How the Lord hath wrought for the bringing about this incalculably great and sovereign purpose, when gathering his church from the ruins of the fall, will be considered under the second branch of our subject, which I now proceed to enter upon, namely, God hath made known "the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared to glory."

I need not in order to heighten the representation of this immense grace of God, in making vessels of mercy from the children of the Adam-fall transgression, take you by the hand, to lead you into those chambers of imagery, which are in your and my heart by nature, in order to shew the total corruption of our lost and degraded state, as we are in ourselves. If the Lord hath not taught the reader this self-knowledge, and made him acquainted with the plague of his own heart, very sure I am, that I cannot teach it to you. But there is one always present that can. And if the Lord should so teach and so convince of sin, you will need no further testimony in proof, how all such when recovered by sovereign grace, are indeed in every sense of the word

vessels of mercy. But what I would at this time particularly desire to dwell upon, is the grace of God in adopting this wonderful process in order to endear his eternal purpose—in first, making his church vessels of glory from eternity, to make them vessels of mercy in time; that so mercy shall be added to grace—and the love of God in redemption, give a lustre even to the glory of eternity. This is a wonderful display both of infinite wisdom, and infinite love, and infinite power.

And the plan in the accomplishment of both, even in the glorious person of our most glorious Christ; this no less forms a vast subject of delight and wonder in the charter of grace. For as in glory, the original and final state of the church, is in Christ; so in time, as vessels of mercy, the whole is also in Christ. Still receives only in both. For the same scriptures which declare the church as originally chosen in Christ, in which the church was altogether passive and bore no part, do as decidedly state that the being vessels of mercy is wholly out of ourselves, and wholly in Christ. "His own arm brought salvation, and of the people there was none with him," Isa. lxiii. 3, 5. Hence the apostle bears testimony to the Lord's own incommunicable work of salvation, when saying, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace," Eph. i. 7. All therefore being in Christ, and by Christ, and for Christ, the vessels of mercy which afore the Lord had prepared unto glory, are alike saved in him; and his glory as the first cause, and the final end, is the pre-disposing ordination of all. Hence the apostle elsewhere offers his thanksgiving for the unspeakable mercy, when he tells the church, "We are bound, (said he,) to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord; because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief

of the truth, whereunto he called you by our gospel to the obtaining of glory by our Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.

I have one more point to accomplish, under the third branch I proposed on this subject, and that is the little word *us* which Paul speaks of, who are the characters that are the vessels of mercy. And though the word itself apparently is so little, yet as it concerns the persons who are the objects and the subjects of it, to you and to me, the word itself is bigger than the world. "The vessels of mercy are, even us (said Paul,) whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles." And who are the called? The same apostle answers the question elsewhere. "We (saith Paul) whom he hath quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; and who were by nature the children of wrath, even as others; but God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ," Eph. ii. 1—5. Do observe—the called are here said to be "by nature the children of wrath, even as others." And observe yet further, that the cause of their quickening is precisely the same, as the text saith, their being vessels of mercy, namely, "God's being rich in mercy," as is said here, that "he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy." So that the whole cause and the final end, is referred into the divine glory. They that are called, are proved thereby that they are "vessels of mercy," and were "afore prepared unto glory." And which is confirmed in another scripture, "They who are the called according to his purpose; for whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified," Rom. viii.

28—30. And to throw down all the distinctions in the election of grace, Paul saith, "not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles." As the apostle elsewhere more fully explains, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus," Gal. iii. 28.

And now what is the result of the whole? Who are vessels of mercy among you, and who are not? They who are, have been "fore prepared unto glory," and are therefore chosen vessels in consequence thereof, and their marks and characters I have shewn from scripture. And the next question is, how many empty vessels are now come to Christ to be filled? Let none go away as he came. It would be a reproach to our most glorious Christ so to do. He saith himself, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," John x. 10. And is there any, yea, is there one, conscious of his want that will go away unsupplied?

Do not say your fears or your conscious unworthiness keeps you back. Oh! say not so. Why herein consists Christ's miracle of grace—that his fulness is exactly suited to our emptiness—and our undeservings to his free salvation. The church would not be suited for our most glorious Christ to get glory by, unless on objects wretched and undeserving he caused his grace to shine. How could the church in all her members be called vessels of mercy, if they were not miserable and wanting mercy? If they were good and full in themselves, what room would there be for Christ?

I shall blush if any who is made sensible of his want go away, while so full, so mighty, so glorious a Saviour is here to supply. "How doth the Lord wait that he may be gracious to you!" Oh! could you look within the veil where thousands now are, that were once vessels of misery here, and found mercy, how would you feel confidence in him; he hath been supplying the

church in all ages, and yet is not the less full. The ocean, his creation, hath been near six thousand years, and hath lost nothing of its salt, neither any thing of its fulness, though supplying all the rivers of the earth; and the sun shines equally bright, equally warm now, as when first made at the creation. And what must our Lord Jesus Christ be, who is the maker of them all?

The Lord accompany these feeble efforts with his sovereign power, and give to every sensible needy vessel of mercy, "to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and heighth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God."

## V.

### THE POTTER'S HOUSE.

The prophet was blessedly taught of God when the Lord led him to the potter's house, and there caused him to hear his words. And every child of God like him, will always find it profitable to go there when the Lord both leads and meets, and teacheth his people there. I admire the Lord's expression of going down to the potter's house. It is truly going down when the soul is humbled before God, and so stripped of all supposed goodness within, that the Lord may find room for himself to dwell in the hearts of his redeemed. It is indeed a blessed *vacuum*, a blessed emptiness, however mortifying to flesh and blood, when every thing of creature confidence is driven out, that Creator fulness may come in. When our hearts are made like the naked walls of a chamber, and the whole trumpery of our own furniture is thrown into the street, then it is blessed, yea, very blessed, to receive the Lord Jesus, and to be filled with "his fulness, which filleth all in all." One of the old testament saints was so overwhelmed in the contemplation of it, that he cried out, "But will God indeed dwell in houses of clay?" To which the answer is, yes! Yea, God himself answers it. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place—with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit," Isa. lvii. 15. From hence we learn, that broken hearts and depressed spirits are the only suited temples for God to dwell in. Here the Lord himself prepares his own habitation; here he provides the temple, and furnisheth it for his own accommodation; and here he saith "he will dwell, for he hath a delight therein?" Psalm cxxxii. 14. Reader! what

know you personally of these things? Hath the Lord so prepared your heart, and doth he dwell there? If so, let us both arise and go down to the potter's house. Yea, methinks I should like to take all that we can find of this description with us there;—our households, our little ones, and every one in whose present and everlasting welfare we feel interested; for very sure I am, if Jesus leads any of his people there, he will both meet them, and cause them to hear his words.

And is this the potter's house? Yes! behold both the potter and his clay! Mark what a sovereignty the man exerciseth over his vessels! See how some are formed compared to others; some to honour, others to dishonour. We may begin our improvements, under divine teaching, at our very entrance to the pottery, for they meet us at the door. Let us first consider the sweet lessons to be gathered herefrom, of God's government in the department of nature. Behold, the Lord saith, "as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel!" If the man of the earth claims to himself this sovereignty, well may the Lord. But the right of God to this exercise, ariseth to a much higher view, when the difference between the heavenly and the earthly potter is considered. In the potter of the earth there is but one common mass from whence both the potter and his potsherds are taken: all have their origin in the same nothingness. What a contrast at once do we consider in the man of the earth compared to the Almighty Potter of heaven! Let us dwell for a moment over the view; for though humbling, the Lord causing us to hear his words, will make it profitable.

When God was pleased to go forth in acts of creation, and call into being this magnificent world, and store it with inhabitants, no difference marked the several creatures in the works of his hands but what grace wrought. Dust was the common stock. The matter

God formed lay in one undistinguished mass, when "darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," Gen. i. 2. Hence the animate and the inanimate in God's ordination, receive the bias of their special destiny from the express command of God. To one lump of matter God decreed the being and properties of fire; to another, of the same lump of matter God gave the opposite being and qualities of water. This had assigned to it to be light, that darkness; this heaven, and that earth. Yea, man himself, the highly favoured object of divine love, and to whom a capability was given at creation of being taken into union with Christ, yet God appointed his origin should be also from the common *stamina*. For so it is written: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground;" here we find confirmed the sameness with the common condition, "and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Here we discover the capability of that union with the Lord Jesus Christ, the great object for which man was created, Gen. ii. 7.

Say, thou dearest Lord Jesus! (for thou only canst teach it by thy Spirit,) was not this creation of man in this way and manner, with a fore-view and fore-ordination of thy taking into union with thyself thy church? Was not this dust of the ground from whence the man was formed, that very habitable part of the earth, in which thou saidst thou didst rejoice, when the Lord "possessed thee in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old," when thou was "set up from everlasting, and thy delights were with the sons of men?" Prov. viii. 22—31. Hadst thou not an eye to this for thine incarnation, when thou wouldst inhabit that holy portion of it, thy human nature, and openly tabernacle with thy people, "God manifest in the flesh?" Say, blessed Jesus! was not this the great design thou hadst in prospect, and not merely the land of Judea, when

fore-viewing the whole plan of grace, thou thyself, as God and man in one, was daily the delight of Jehovah, "rejoicing always before him," and thyself rejoicing in "the habitable part of his earth?" Reader! ponder well the precious consideration, (for it is most precious,) and look to Jesus for his teaching to inform thee. According to my view of the subject, it was in this light the Son of God, in his Wisdom character, spake; and a sweet savour it affords to the fragrancy of his person, in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Secondly. Let our next view of the potter's house be in the department of grace. Let us hear what saith the Lord: "And, behold, the potter wrought a work on the wheels; and the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, O house of Israel! cannot I do with you as this potter, saith the Lord?" Jer. xviii. 3—6. Here we have a very beautiful figure to illustrate the ruined state of our nature by, in the Adam-fall transgression, and our recovery by grace, when new made vessels of mercy in and by our Lord Jesus Christ.

No sooner did our being come forth from the hands of the Lord, in the original purity in which that being was created, when the whole was marred by sin and transgression. The beautiful structure of man was dashed to pieces like a potter's vessel. The temple framed for the indwelling of God, was altogether thrown down and defiled. And excepting here and there certain fragments of broken columns and pillars which remained, just enough to shew its original splendour; not a vestige of loveliness could be found. The immediate cause of this vast change was the sin of man; but the immense blessings involved in the eventful consequences resulting from it, proved that the per-

mission of this evil came from the Lord. All the ways and works of God, when surveyed by human scantlings, are deep and mysterious; and this eminently so.

Nothing can be more plain than that the whole purposes of redemption found room for their accomplishment in the fall. Had not our nature, like the vessel marred in the hand of the potter, become vessels of misery, there could have been no possibility of new-making them vessels of mercy; for mercy can only be exercised towards the miserable. The love of God, and the grace of God, and all the other attributes of God, find ample scope many ways for manifestation towards God's creatures.—But without misery, how could God ever shew mercy? Our interest in Christ, and communion with Christ, arise from sources of personal relationship to Christ. Had man never fallen, the church would not have known Christ as her "head and husband; in whom she was chosen and adopted, and accepted from all eternity. But the church never could have known Christ as her Redeemer and Saviour, but from her fall in sin, and the Lord redeeming her by his blood. Hence we have "redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace," is the sole result of the Lord's recovery of us from the Adam-fall transgression, which afforded this occasion to the Lord for such manifestation of his favour, and without which could not have been wrought. Unles the vessel had been marred, it could not have been new made.

Perhaps it may be said, that on this supposition, as we should not have known sin, neither indeed mercy, the sorrows of this world we should have been exempt from, and uninterrupted happiness followed. To which it may be answered—no doubt, had it corresponded to the counsel of the Lord's will, and been suited to the vast plan of his purposes, the church no sooner chosen

to be holy in Christ, might have been taken to heaven with Christ; and the vessels afore prepared to glory, as they are called, Rom. ix. 22. might at once have been taken to glory. And had the Lord so appointed, there would have been abundant cause for thanksgiving, in the abounding grace bestowed upon the church to all eternity. But then, we should have lost one of the sweetest notes to our everlasting song, and never sung the transporting hymn of redemption to Christ, for washing us in his blood. And worse than this, Jesus the Son of God, would never have been hailed by his church as her Redeemer and Saviour; and therefore God said things must not be so. "My people shall know my name." They shall be vessels of mercy, before they are vessels of glory. Their nature shall be marred, as the vessel in the hand of the potter, that a greater degree of happiness may be in their portion, and the Son of God get more abundant glory in their salvation. Hence we have now a double cause for thankfulness in our personal relationship to Christ, as our head and husband; and our interest in Christ by redemption, as our Redeemer and Saviour. "Oh the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Thirdly. From the department of nature and grace in which we thus receive instruction at the pottery, we shall no less be taught sweet lessons also in the department of God's providence, as we look on, if so be the Lord cause us to hear his words. See here how various the vessels the man hath formed in his potsherd! here are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; some to honour and some to dishonour!—and all from the same materials. And who ever ventured to call the potter's judgment in question, wherefore the one portion was applied by him to an honourable use, while another was directed by him to

an ignoble purpose? "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?" The thing speaks for itself. The answer is in the very question. He hath: no one ever doubted it. But when this reasoning is applied to the Almighty Potter, how often in deeds, if not in words, do we find men, yea, too often God's children also, ready to exclaim, both why hast thou made me thus? and why useth thou me thus?

There is not a sweeter instruction in reference to the Lord's providences, neither one more needful to be always kept in view, than what this department of the subject furnisheth. Reader! depend upon it, God's best taught children would find it profitable to go often down to the potter's house, in order to learn again and again this wholesome truth. Where there are great proportions of grace, there are not unfrequently also great corruptions. And we need not only to make constant visits to the pottery, but as often for the Lord to cause us "to hear his words" there, or we soon lose sight, under trying dispensations, of what is called in scripture, "the patience and faith of the saints," Rev. xiii. 10. It forms a gracious remedy to numberless evils of life, when at the potter's house we see the man uninterruptedly going on moulding and shapening his vessels at his pleasure, and we call to mind the wisdom and the love of our Almighty Potter. Jesus cannot err, cannot mistake. He is invariably pursuing one plan of good to all his vessels of mercy, preparing for glory. He speaks in every act to every one: "I know the thoughts I think towards you, saith the Lord—thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end," Jer. xxix. 11.

Jacob was a man of strong faith, but of strong passions also. He had long known the Lord, and long tried the Lord, and found him as faithful a performing God, as a promising God. But when the Lord led

him to the Potter's house, to learn lessons concerning the disposal of his children in Egypt, the heart of the patriarch gave way, and cried out, "me have ye bereaved of my children; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away also: all these things are against me," Gen. xlii. 36. But were these things against thee, O Jacob? Oh! how graciously, in the very moment of the patriarch's complaint, was the Almighty Potter ordering and arranging the whole vessels of Jacob's house, for the advancement and joy of himself, and all the branches of his family! Reader! what lessons are you gathering at the pottery in this department of the Lord's providences? Hath God chosen you in Christ, given you a being in Christ, and a well-being in Christ, and made you accepted in Christ, as God's beloved, before the foundation of the world? And can you not under these convictions of a safety for eternity, trust the Lord for every event of the present time-state of the church? Do you know the jewel secure, and have you fears or doubts respecting the casket? Are you assured of landing safe on the eternal shore, and seeing the face of God in glory, and do the ill accommodations of the ferry-boat, or the troublesomeness of the passengers, distress you? Oh! what a relief may a child of God find at the potter's house, under a thousand thwarting providences! The very single thought alone, that all God's purposes concerning his people were framed before the world, and all events concerning them placed in the hands of Christ; yea, not a thought about them, but in Christ; making every thing subservient here to their well-being hereafter: such views would keep the mind in perfect peace amidst all frowning dispensations. Very blessedly Paul and his companions sung their hymn of repose, under all their exercises, when they said, "For this cause (said he) we faint not; but though our outward man perish, our inward man is renewed day

by day. While we look not (said he) at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal," 2 Cor. iv. 16, 18.

Are there any further lessons to be learnt at the potter's house? Yes! we have been endeavouring to gather therefrom some sweet instructions in the three great departments of nature, grace, and providence; and there is a fourth in relation to glory, and that glory all in Christ, which is here taught, and which is higher if possible than all. Let us, while at the pottery, beg the Lord for grace to contemplate it, and to cause us to hear his words.

Look at the potter of the earth once more. Call to mind that the man and his vessels both have their original ancestry from the dust, and both return to the dust again. And recollect that all the difference now, in their time-state, between the potter and his potsherds, God's grace, and not the man's merit, hath wrought. Then turn your thoughts, and contemplate the Almighty Potter of heaven in his greatness of character; in comparison of whom all the works of his hands, yea, every potter, and all potsherds, are equally at an infinite distance! While, then, we look on, and behold the man at his earthly pottery, forming his different vessels from the same materials, as seemeth best to the potter to make them, we see no more than what the disparity grace hath made between the potter and his clay, renders plain and familiar to our apprehensions. But suppose, what is indeed in itself impossible, but may for the moment be supposed for the sake of illustration—suppose we were to see the potter of the earth taking a portion of his clay into union with himself; what wonderful condescension, to say no more of it, would this be? And yet you know in an infinitely higher degree of disparity, this hath God our Almighty

Potter done, in the instance of every vessel of mercy, afore prepared to glory! Yea, God himself, in the person of his dear Son, hath taken into union with himself that holy portion of our nature, when, for the purpose of glory to his church, "the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," John i. 14. Reader! what a view is here, and what a sublimity of thought ariseth from hence, in the contemplation of the potter's house! Solomon, when he had finished his magnificent temple, as he pondered the vast design for which it was built, was struck with astonishment that the great God which inhabiteth eternity, and whom "the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain," should dwell in temples made with hands! "But will God indeed, said he, dwell on earth?" 1 Kings viii. 27. But what is this, yea, and every other act of condescension and grace compared to that of God personally taking into union with himself his church, and becoming one with her! Think what a vast subject is here opened to the soul of every regenerated child of God! Who can contemplate even the very surface of the immense ocean of it, the love of God in Christ, without being lost in the apprehension! Who, indeed, shall ever fathom the infinite dimensions "of a love which passeth knowledge!"

Have we finished our meditations at the pottery? Shall we leave it? Surely not before we have first bent the knee in prayer and praise to the God of all our mercies. Do we behold the man of the earth exercising, with uncontrolled sway, his authority over his inanimate vessels; and hath the Lord caused us to hear his words, saying, "cannot I do with you as this potter, saith the Lord?" Are we conscious of the Lord's sovereignty in his unlimited power, and sensible that that sovereignty hath been manifested in such a way of distinguishing grace towards us, that when the Lord

might have placed our being among the lowest order of animal life, yea, among creatures disgusting to man, he hath given us a place among the highest rank of being here below; so that we see no class of creation as exalted as ourselves? Hath God done more to you, to me? Hath he given us a name "better than of sons and of daughters: made us heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ;" created us in his own image in nature; formed us in a new creation, when marred by sin, by redeeming us in grace; watched over us in all the dispensations of his providence; and from an union with Christ, hath designed us and prepared us for vessels of glory? Can these merciful designs towards us, with all the thousand and ten thousand blessings of time and eternity, connected with the purpose of God, be in our contemplation as we stand in the potter's house, when the Lord causeth us to hear his word; and shall we not both fall down before the footstool of God in Christ, crying out with the apostle, "thanks, thanks, be unto God, for his unspeakable gift." Well may every child of God, conscious of his being a partaker in grace, sing the old testament psalm from the divinely tuned heart of the new testament dispensation; "Sing, O ye heavens! for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth! Break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein! for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel," Isa. xliv. 23.

As we ascend from the potter's house, let us seek grace from the Lord that our visit there may not leave a transient effect upon our minds, but, "like bread cast upon the waters, be found after many days." We shall do well to commit what the Lord hath there taught us into the Lord's hands, to bring to our remembrance another day, as he did to Jacob former manifestations upon after occasions. When the visions of God began with the patriarch at Bethel; and under the impres-

sions he arose and built a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it, and called it, Bethel, the house of God! Many years after this, when the Lord spake unto him in a dream, calling him by his name, the Lord, that he might not overlook past mercies in the new favour, referred the patriarch for his knowledge of him to this transaction; the Lord said, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me." Compare Gen. xxvii. 18. with Gen. xxxi. 11—13. Reader! if you and I have been down to the potter's house by the Lord's leadings, and the Lord hath caused us to hear his words, let us be on the look out for "the renewings of the Holy Ghost, shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." It is one of the gracious offices of the Holy Ghost to bring to remembrance the things of Jesus, and shew unto us. And if the Lord hath refreshed our minds at the potter's house, let us be always waiting for the sweet savour of the Lord's presence in our own.

We have seen how much improvement may be gathered under the Lord's teachings at the human pottery, in the several departments of nature, and grace, and providence, and glory. Let an abiding sense of it cause our souls to lay low in the dust before God, as often as we call to mind God's sovereignty in his divine pottery, where the Lord "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." In all our transactions with man, we cannot ponder the matter too deeply, nor act with too much caution. Potsherds may strive with potsherds; and as vessels of earth, (for they are no other) if they strike violently each against his fellow, they may crack both. But these things are not with God. "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!" The place of safety for a child of God to be found in, is when God's sovereignty is in its warmest affection. As long as I feel a proper sense of my creatureship,

and God's almightiness, I shall be in the best frame, through grace, to give glory to God. And sure I am that while the Lord gives me faith to desire God's decrees in Christ to be accomplished, whatever becomes of me, I shall be brought by the Lord into the sweetest frame faith can arrive at before swallowed up in sight, and to say with one of old, "though he slay me, yet will I trust in him!" Oh! it is blessed, yea, very blessed, to lay as clay in the potter's hand, passive and depending. God in Christ is of one mind, and who can change him? And never will be forgot the relationship he hath put himself into with his people. Once a Father in Christ, he is always so: and with the tenderness and endearing love of the Father, he saith himself that in the day he maketh up his jewels he will acknowledge it: "I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him!" Malachi iii. 17.

Reader, farewell! As oft as the Lord is exercising you with his loving fatherly dispensations, do not consult with flesh and blood, but go, my brother, arise, and go down to the potter's house, and beg of God that leads you there to meet you there, and cause you to hear his words. Here is the Lord's university of learning; this is the college where the prophets and apostles have been educated. Here they studied that wisdom which maketh wise unto salvation; and purchased to themselves a good degree, and "great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus!" And here, blessed Lord, do thou often lead me, and "cause me to hear thy words!"

## VI.

GOD'S WILL AND MAN'S SHALL; AN EVERLASTING SECURITY TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, WHO ARE CALLED ACCORDING TO GOD'S PURPOSE. TO WHICH IS ADDED, OBSERVATIONS ON THAT INTERESTING PASSAGE, HEBREWS vi. 4—6. PROVING FROM THAT VERY SCRIPTURE, THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF ANY OF GOD'S CHOSEN AND CALLED ONES, FALLING FINALLY FROM GRACE.

It is very blessed to run over again and again the precious testimonies from the Lord of our safety and security in Christ, made sure by covenant engagements. And when the Holy Ghost at any time acts in that sweet office of his as the *Remembrancer* of Christ Jesus, the child of God is sure to feel and enjoy the blessedness of it. "He shall bring all things (saith the Lord Jesus) to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you," John xiv. 26. And if the regenerated child of God (for it is to them I write, and for them only this tract is designed) were to watch the traces of the Spirit upon their hearts, in this lovely character of the *Remembrancer*, they would find it opening to them a continual feast. There are *two* very blessed instances by which the Lord the Holy Ghost manifests his divine agency to the hearts of the Lord's people under this his divine ministry. *First*, in glorifying the person of Christ to their view; and *secondly*, in taking of "the things of Christ and shewing them unto them." In both which he acts as a *Remembrancer*, in reminding them of Christ's fulness, and their continual want of him. And this the Lord doth so sweetly, and so blessedly, both in relation to Christ's loveliness and all-sufficiency; and in his suitableness to them, and they for him; as to fill the soul with "a joy unspeakable and full of glory!"

And in no one part of the office of a *Remembrancer* is the Holy Ghost more needed by the church, than in

relation to the often bringing to our recollection our absolute safety and security in the covenant. For, as it is " ordered in all things and sure," from being founded in the everlasting purpose, counsel, will and pleasure of Jehovah in his trinity of persons; so every promise is confirmed by word, oath, and blood; and becomes " yea and amen in Christ Jesus," 2 Cor. i. 20. And hence, God is continually speaking in a strain concerning it through all the bible, in his *wills* and *shalls*, as relating both to himself and to his people, as leaves nothing at a peradventure for the final event of it. " I will not (saith Jehovah, as he answers for himself,) turn away from them." And they " shall not (as he undertakes for them also,) depart from me." And what can be needed further, to make all things sure?

It will be no unprofitable employment, if we look at *one* or *two* of the covenant promises, with an eye to this unspeakable mercy, and observe on what firm ground they stand. The regenerated child of God (and let it be again and again remembered, that it is for such only this tract is intended) will find in them sweet consolation on this point, and they will serve as a sample of numberless others in the bible, which the reader himself may be continually gathering for his comfort and his joy.

I begin with that sweet one by the prophet Jeremiah, part of which I have placed as a motto on the title-page, and which is as beautiful as it is interesting.

The Lord is speaking very graciously concerning his people, after he had been describing their unworthiness and departures from him.

" Behold! I will gather them out of all countries whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath, and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart and one way, that they

may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their heart that they ahall not depart from me."

Now observe, the Lord begins the sweet promise with *behold!* And well may the whole church of the living God look up, and behold and attend to so rich a cluster of mercies, and gather them one by one, and eat them, as the prophet saith he did the Lord's word, when he had found it, Jer. xv. 16.

And let the reader remark, that no less than *ten times* in this one promise the Lord positively speaks of his *wills*, and his people's *shalls*. Nothing doubtful, nothing uncertain, or liable to change.

And observe yet further, when is it the Lord begins the special manifestation of these rich promises? Even when for his people's great sins and provocations he had driven them, and scattered them, in his anger, and fury, and great wrath, among various countries; so that in the very moment they merited punishment, the Lord was going forth in mercy: and at the time they deserved hell, he was preparing according to covenant agreement to take them home to heaven. And indeed, this is the express language in the charter of grace. "If his children (saith God the Father) forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments." Well, what follows? Doth the Lord say, I will cast them off, and receive them no more? Oh! blessed be a covenant God, not so! But on the contrary, the Lord saith, "Though I will visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless, (this blessed nevertheless is always in the covenant,) my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness, I will not lie unto David," Ps. lxxxix. 30, and

throughout. We have a similar passage, and another such an one for beauty, Isa. lvii. 17. where the Lord speaking as usual of Israel's shameful conduct, the Lord saith, " For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him; I hid me and was wroth; and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart." Here was impudence for you to an excess. God's wrath, and God's smiting Israel he regarded not; neither the frown nor the rod will do without grace. Well, what is to be done? Why, saith a gracious, long-suffering, tender, compassionate God, it is of no use for me to " contend for ever, neither to be always wroth, for the spirit should then fail before me, and the souls which I have made," Isa. lvii. 16.

Well, what will the Lord do? Why, saith God, he will never turn to me, until I have turned to him; therefore, " I have seen his ways, and I will heal him!" Oh! the ways and works of a wonder-working God!

And in like manner the whole passage of the Lord, by the prophet Jeremiah, runs from beginning to end. It is all made up of God's *wills* and man's *shalls*. " I will gather them." " I will bring them again." " I will cause them to dwell safely." " They shall be my people." " I will be their God." " I will give them one heart and one way." " I will make an everlasting covenant with them." All, all is God's will, God's work, God's act; the church is merely a *receiver*, and no *worker*. The Lord undertakes for *both*. God saith, " I will not." And the same God saith, " they shall not." And what can be needed more? We have another similar promise given by the Holy Ghost to the church in the same book of the prophets, Jer. xxxi. 8, 9.

" Behold! I will bring them forth from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth; and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child, and her that travaileth with child together; and a great company shall return thither. They shall

come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born."

Here again, as in the former instance, the gracious promise, or rather the string of promises, is ushered in with a note of admiration, as well it may. These *beholds* from the Lord are all ponderous, and full of blessings. "Behold mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth," saith the Father, when introducing his dear Son to the church! Isa. xlii. 1. "Behold me, behold me, saith the Son of God to his church," Isa. lxv. 1. "Behold the Lamb of God!" saith the Holy Ghost to the church, when pointing to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, John i. 29.

And observe here again, as in the other passage noticed, how many *wills* and *shalls* are contained in the bosom of it: intimating no possibility of failure.

And observe yet further, the certainty of the whole being fulfilled, from the certainty on which they rest. It is "the God of all the families of Israel;" as in the opening of the chapter is spoken of, who maketh the promises; and therefore they cannot fail. For if the God of Israel makes the promise of the inheritance to his Israel, surely the right of inheritance is confirmed. But let us now look at the promises themselves.

*First.*—The Lord saith that he will gather them not only from Babylon, the north country, but from all the coasts of the earth. Do not overlook these things. It is God who undertakes for them. He will do it; and there is nothing expected from themselves. And what God undertakes, God will perform.

*Secondly.*—But they are scattered. Yes! but he that undertakes to see them home, will gather them for that purpose out of all the variety of places whither they have wandered. Jesus hath covenanted to bring the prisoners out of captivity, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. There shall be a day

when they shall be all gathered to Shiloh, from the east and from the west, and from the north, and from the south; and they shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom.

*Thirdly.*—But they are not only scattered, but diminished; and not only in the enemies hand, but few in number. No! God saith, they are many in number: for a great company shall return thither. But they are blind, and cannot *see* the way; they are ignorant, and cannot *find* the way; theyare lame, and cannot *walk* in the way. God saith that he will be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and himself the way to bring them in a way they know not, and to lead them in paths they have not known. But some of them are poor women with child, and cannot undertake such a journey; and some of them actually in labour, and to whom it would be apparently death under such circumstances to move. No! saith God, these things shall be no impediment: for the woman in pregnancy shall feel herself prompted to undertake the return, and shall succeed in it; and even her that travaileth with child shall find her strength even to her day. Oh the sovereignty of free grace! What cannot be accomplished when God promiseth!

*Fourthly.*—And how sweet and precious the promise goeth on; the Lord that undertakes to bring them, undertakes at the same time for the whole accommodation by the way. As free grace turns the heart, so free grace softens and subdues all the stubbornness of the heart. They shall come with weeping, and with supplication will I lead them. Yes! the Holy Ghost takes away the heart of stone and gives an heart of flesh. And therefore, when the soul melts, the eye causeth the tear to fall. And that no thirst or sultry road may distress; no obstruction, no difficulty, may be sufficient to impede their journey; the Lord undertakes to remove every one from before them, causing them to walk in the rivers of waters, to quench their thirst, and to make

straight paths for their feet; and the whole is summed up and accounted for in covenant relationship and promises; for saith the Lord, "I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born."

Let the reader pause over the wonderful account of grace, and refer the whole into the first and only cause; the sole purpose, counsel, will and pleasure of a wonder-working God. And then let him say, must not every child of God that is truly and savingly called by sovereign grace, (and let it be once again remembered that it is to such only this little tract is sent forth) find in it a sure and everlasting security from the *wills* and *shalls* of God, that nothing can arise to counteract God's design, nor defeat the plan of God's grace, in their certain salvation?

God's *wills* and man's *shalls*, are all made over in covenant engagements. God our Father hath engaged to his dear Son. God the Son hath made it all sure in his blood and righteousness. And God the Holy Ghost hath given the earnest in the heart in every one regenerated by his power of the promised inheritance. Arise what may, nothing can arise for which God hath not made provision. "And the foundation standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. And now in addition to these sure and certain covenant promises of a covenant God in Christ, let it be only added how admirably calculated such assurances are to beget holiness in the heart of every child of God; and surely the whole doctrine will be unanswerable. Some there are who, from being great advocates for the *free will* of the creature, profess to be greatly alarmed at this doctrine of free grace, and in the lightness of their mind, have ventured to suppose that the belief of it is like opening the flood-gates of sin. Alas! such men so speak, because they know not the scriptures, neither the power of God; but are ignorant of what they say, and whereof they affirm.

For *first*, what can as effectually secure the honour of God's laws as the grace of God in the hearts of his people? Who is most likely to be examples of believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity? the regenerated child of God who undertakes nothing but in divine strength, and desires nothing but the divine glory; or the man who makes his own free will the standard of his endeavours, and depends more upon an arm of flesh, than in the power of God?

*Secondly.*—Free will is in direct opposition to *free grace* and to the declaration of scripture; and how then can such a plan promote holiness of life and conversation? *Free will* declares that man is sufficient of himself to obey the commands of God, or at least that if man will do *his part*, God will do *his*. Free grace, on the contrary, declares that "it is by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast," Ephes. ii. 8, 9. According to this different statement, if we are to judge by *free will*, God neither can nor will save any soul without his own labours and an holy life. According to *free grace*, our whole salvation is of God. In the *free will* scheme, God's covenant depends upon man's performance; and God's grace on man's merit. In the *free grace* scheme, God's promises are in himself, and the fulfilment not liable to fail. Which is most likely to promote holiness of life, is easy to discover. God's will that he will keep them, and that they shall not depart from him, makes free grace sure. And the Lord's promise is, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power," Ps. cx. 3.

And lastly, to add no more. It is for God's honour, as well as for his people's happiness, to keep them from falling, and to preserve them blameless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. When the Lord saith, "be ye holy, for I am holy;" this is not merely a precept, but a precept with a promise; namely,

"ye shall be holy." The Lord with the promise imparts ability. So again, when the Lord Jesus said, "Abide in me, and I in you, for without me ye can do nothing," John xiv. 4. this was not simply a command; but a command accompanied with grace to perform it; as if the Lord Jesus had said, "ye shall abide." I will enable you so to do.

And as the Lord who willeth the salvation of his people, willeth also the means for the accomplishment of it; his unchangeableness cannot suffer the possibility of a failure, or subject his grace to the peradventure of man's obedience. Oh! what a sad close to the reign of salvation, if the giving up his dear Son to the cross still rendered the soul travail of his agonies and death, the matter of uncertainty, whether even one soul would be benefited by it. For if one soul were in a possibility to be lost for whom Christ died, all souls would in like manner be equally liable; and where would be the purpose, will, and pleasure of Jehovah?

Reader! think how blessed it is to behold the gracious provisions the Lord hath made for his people in the finished salvation he himself hath wrought. The Lord give to all his people whom he hath brought under the rod of the covenant, and made willing in the day of his power, to see that in God's will, and man's shall, an everlasting security is made for salvation to the church of Christ, and who are the called according to his purpose.

As many of God's dear children, through the slenderness of their faith, and from the view of certain awful characters here and there, who from making a flaming profession of faith, but never possessed it, when that profession hath been over, have concluded that this was a falling from grace, though they never were in grace, and therefore have been much distressed; I have thought it might be profitable under the Lord the Spirit to drop a word or two in a way of explanation on

such characters. And as that beautiful portion in the word of God, Hebrews vi. 4—6, opens a blessed occasion to illustrate the subject; to the foregoing tract I have subjoined a few short observations on that memorable scripture, which I pray the Lord to bless to his people's comfort and his own glory.

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THOUGHTS ON THAT PASSAGE IN THE HEBREWS, vi. 4—6.

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

No doubt for want of due attention to divine teaching, by the perversion of some, and the mistaken apprehension of others, there hath been given rise to much anxiety in weak minds, through the slenderness of their faith. But under the blessed unction of God the Holy Ghost, every child of God that is truly and savingly regenerated, will by the smallest attention be led to discover that there is not the smallest cause to fear, nor the least shadow of a reason to gather conclusion therefrom of the possibility of falling away from grace.

The Holy Ghost is drawing in those verses the portrait of finished hypocrites; and not one single feature in the whole which belongs to a real child of God. The persons here described are such as throw forth much false light under a flaming profession, but never were partakers of grace; and therefore never having been in grace, it were impossible that they should fall from grace. They fell from a profession only, and as such, they could not be renewed to a profession by their repentance.

As the subject in itself is so highly important, and as a right apprehension of the Lord's words becomes so truly interesting to every child of God, and especially to any that are weak in faith; I shall hope the

reader's indulgence, if I enter upon the examination of this passage in scripture somewhat more particularly. For my own part, I am very fully convinced that the words themselves, from beginning to end, have no one reference whatever to the church of God; that the Lord the Holy Ghost is speaking of hypocrites and unregenerated professors only; and that the whole subject, if duly considered, is calculated more to comfort than distress the Lord's people. May God the Spirit, the Almighty Author of this and all scripture, bless our present review of it, and give to every child of God a right understanding in this and in all things.

And here to begin. The first feature here given of those who fall away, is that of being "once enlightened;" by which is meant an enlightening in head knowledge. And it is really astonishing to conceive to what lengths men who have been accustomed to sit under the sound of the gospel, may go in a way of profession, without possessing an atom of saving grace. But the doctrine of Christ in insisting on regeneration, or the new birth, throws to the ground all and every pretension short of this, John iii. 7. "It is with the heart man believeth unto righteousness," Rom. x. 10. If head knowledge would make wise unto salvation, the devil himself would be in a salvable state; for he told Christ that he knew him to be the Son of God. But devils believe only to tremble, Matthew viii. 29; James ii. 9. I presume that no one will venture to call this enlightening a mark of regeneration, and of the true knowledge of God.

The second feature in the character of those professors is, that of "having tasted the heavenly gift." Yes; Christ is indeed the heavenly gift, even the gift of God the Father to his church sent down from heaven. And these hypocrites are said to have tasted of it; for wherever Christ is preached as the free full gift of God in his finished salvation, all who hear the gracious proclamation may be said to have tasted of it. But all unrege-

nerate professors taste of it and dislike it. Redemption by the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ alone, no pharisee will relish; but like children which nauseate medicine, though under God's blessing would heal them, they spit it out of their mouth. Here again every man of candour must confess that we find no mark of real grace.

The third feature is, they are said to be "made partakers of the Holy Ghost." This indeed in the first view, carries with it somewhat more plausible; but when looked into, is but seemingly so, for it hath no more of real saving grace than either of the former. Every one may in a certain sense be said to be made partakers of the Holy Ghost, who is brought under the preaching of the gospel, and partakes in the ordinance and means of grace. They whose carcases fell in the wilderness, as well as the faithful whom the Lord brought into Canaan, were all alike partakers of the manna, and drank of the rock, and had the carnal ordinances of the worldly sanctuary, Heb. ix. 1. But none except the chosen seed eyed Christ, or knew and enjoyed Christ in all. Nay, we may go further under this feature of character, and behold men made partakers of the Holy Ghost in many yet more striking particulars, in external privileges, and yet all the while totally void of the renewings of the Holy Ghost in the soul. How many do we read of in the word of God which were made partakers of the Holy Ghost in his outward gifts, and even to the working of miracles; but yet were never partakers of the Holy Ghost in his inward regenerating grace? The magicians in the court of Pharaoh were permitted to a certain degree to exercise power; and Judas in the college of apostles had the same faculty in outward acts with them, Luke ix. 1. But in the midst of those, there was no inward work of God the Spirit on either. And it is the new birth which is the only infallible character.

Fourthly. Those persons are said "to have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come." They are not said to have drank into the spirit of those precious things, nor relished them. The Holy Ghost dwells particularly on tasting, as if to shew their aversion. They tasted of the good word of God, so as to manifest their more deadly hatred to it. And they heard or felt enough in that tasting, and hearing of the powers of the world to come, as in their consciences to believe there is an hereafter, in which it will be "well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked;" but like Balaam, though sufficiently convinced of those solemn truths, as now and then to send forth the wish "to die the death of the righteous," yet never awakened by sovereign grace to live their life. Numb. xxiii. 10.

Reader! pause over those portraits of character, for they are truly awful, and perhaps much more general than is imagined. But what hath the child of God to do with such things, in whose spirit the Holy Spirit witnesseth that they are born of God? They are indeed very awful monuments for the children of God to contemplate as they pass on their pilgrimage state. For we behold in them to what an height of elevation nature may go in a way of resembling grace. And they ought to serve, (as no doubt God the Holy Ghost intended they should) to make the truly regenerated the more awakened to leave the first principles of the doctrines of grace, and press after greater knowledge of and communion with Christ. But while such clear marks are discoverable between nature and grace, surely the children of God ought not to confound one with the other. And to be led into the conclusion that there may be a falling from grace, because men who never were in grace, have for a while taken up with the profession, and then dropped it, is forming conclusions from false premises. Nature in her highest attainments is but nature. Nothing can rise above its source. It

is very possible that by hearing sermons, attending the means of grace, and ordinances of the word of God, the understanding may be enlightened. The young man in the gospel who came to Christ, promised at the first great things, and seemed to look fair for heaven. Paul the apostle, while he lived a pharisee, thought himself not far from glory. But in both at this time there was not a single act of renewing grace wrought in their hearts. In all instances therefore of an unregenerate state, the mind is still carnal and in enmity against God; the tiger though chained, is no less the tiger. Nothing short of the new birth is grace. Where this is, it is impossible to fall away, for the scripture saith, that the highly beloved objects are "made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. Where this is not, the most flaming profession will go out in obscure darkness. Such have the form, but not the power of godliness, 2 Tim. iii. 5.

Before I dismiss this view of the subject, I would add one observation more, by way of confirming what hath been said, namely, that in all the account given in this chapter by the Holy Ghost of these hypocrites, there is not a single circumstance even hinted at, of those precious fruits and effects being found in them which arise from grace in the heart, and where a saving act of regeneration hath passed upon the soul. In this whole account of being enlightened, and having tasted of the heavenly gift, and the like; we read nothing of faith and love, or an adherence to, or walking with Jesus, or affection to his people. Not one word of an holy life, or conversation, or of the plague of the heart, and laying low in the dust before God; all which are among the sure consequences of regeneration, or the new birth. But all that is said from beginning to end, is no more than what may be said of mere professors only, who are like clouds without water, carried about

with the mere wind of doctrine; and who, though they have a name to live, are virtually dead before God.

Hence, as is here said, if they fall away from this profession, and openly deny it, and (as have been seen in many instances,) after having put on a sanctity of appearance, and by restraints, induced from the fear or praise of men, have for a while seemingly escaped the pollution which is in the world through lust, at length return like the dog to his vomit, and as the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire; they only manifest that all that was before seen of them, was but the efforts of nature, and not grace. And how then can such be restored again to the same profession? The thing is impossible. They may indeed like Judas repent themselves, and do as he did, hang themselves; but the Lord will not grant to them his grace of repentance in the regeneration of the heart. And for this plain reason. They do in effect, by the denial of that faith they once owned in head, though felt not in the heart, "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." For as when the gospel of Christ was preached and made known to them, that is, when they were once enlightened with head knowledge, that the Son of God had been crucified for his people, and their sense and understanding, though not their affections, were gained to the acknowledgment of these glorious truths connected with Christ and his great salvation, they professed to believe them, and receive them; but now, by their apostacy from the truth as it is in Jesus, they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, either by denying his Godhead as the Son of God, or denying that his offering on the cross was not a sufficient sacrifice for the redemption of his people; that he had not arisen from the dead; that salvation is not finished; and somewhat more than Christ alone is needed for justification before God: in

either, or all of these, or the like objections, this is to crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. And therefore utterly impossible it is, in such cases, to renew men of this description and character to repentance. I beg the reader, before he takes leave of this passage of holy scripture, to mark the expression; they are said "to crucify to themselves." Yes! for in their apostacy and denial, they fully prove that Christ was never crucified for them; for they have no part nor lot in the matter. The one all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ upon the cross was not in their view all-sufficient. They know in their own souls nothing of it: therefore they insult the soul travail and agonies which Christ sustained, by their despising the efficacy of both. Such therefore become hardened in their iniquity, and "the last state of such men, is worse than the first."

## VII.

### THE STRAYED SHEEP OF CHRIST BROUGHT BACK BY CHRIST TO HIS FOLD.

It was a popular method, much used in the eastern world, in systems of education, to render their several subjects familiar by similitudes and parables. And God the Holy Ghost was pleased to direct his servants the prophets, to the adoption of the same plan, when conveying divine truths through human mediums. Yea, our Lord himself, "who spake as never man spake," not only condescended to deliver his unequalled discourses in this way in the audience of the people, but so generally proverbial were his sermons, that it is said, at one period in his ministry, "without a parable spake he not unto them," Matt. xiii. 34. And under his divine sanction we may discover the great utility of this mode of teaching. The chief treasure of the east, consisted in flocks and herds, and the various products of agriculture. Nothing therefore could have been more admirably chosen in a way of accommodation to the understandings of the people, than the illustrating by figures of what was delivered to them, with which they were daily conversant. And among the many, the representation of the church of Christ, under the image of a sheep-fold, became one of the plainest to be understood, and the most interesting to attract their attention.

And it is no small addition to manifest the correctness of the plan, that Jehovah in his trinity of persons hath adopted similar language, when speaking of or to each other. God the Father, when making proclamation to the church concerning Christ, calls him expressly shepherd; yea, his shepherd. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that

is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts," Zech. xiii. 7. And the Son of God, adopting the same manner of speaking in allusion to the Father, calls him "his shepherd," Psalm xxiii. 1; and speaks of his sheep, as the Father's gift, John x. 29. Yea, and it is evident by what the Lord said of them, that he valued them more on this account, than on his own. "Thine they were, (said Jesus,) and thou givest them me." And again: "All mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them," John xvii. 6—10. And no less God the Holy Ghost, is for ever dwelling upon the sweet subject in allusion to Christ as a shepherd. He calls him the shepherd of Israel, Gen. xlix. 24; Ps. lxxx. 1; the one shepherd, Ezek. xxxiv. 23; the chief shepherd, 1 Pet. v. 4; the great shepherd, Heb. xiii. 20; the "shepherd and bishop of souls," 1 Pet. ii. 25. And the Lord Jesus manifests his approval of the whole, when declaring himself to be the good shepherd, "which giveth his life for the sheep," John x. 14.

Neither in defining the subject under this scriptural designation, must it be overlooked, that while the Son of God in our nature is thus made known to his church; Jesus delights to make her known "as his people, and the sheep of his pasture." The Lord dwells upon this subject with a special joy, in this affinity of the church to himself, under this endeared character. He describes her as peculiarly and specially his own: "my dove, my undefiled is but one, she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bear her," Song vi. 9. Hence the sheep-fold of Christ is totally distinguished from all the flocks of goats, or the wolves, though in sheep's clothing, over the face of the whole earth. All the persons in the Godhead have taken equal part and interest in the whole fold. God the Father chose them all in Christ "before the foundation of the world," Eph. i. 4; God the Son, "betrothed them to himself from everlasting;" and redeemed them when fallen by

his blood, Hosea ii. 19; Rev. v. 9. And God the Holy Ghost, "anointed them in Christ, and with Christ, and regenerated, and seals them unto the day of redemption," 1 John ii. 20; Titus iii. 5, 6; 2 Cor. v. 5; Eph. iv. 30. Hence the whole persons in the Godhead have equal property, and take equal concern in the interests and happiness of the church. But to our most glorious Christ, as the great Shepherd of his sheep, the efficiency of the ministry, in executing all the purposes, counsels, and decrees of Jehovah belong. He, by virtue of union with his church is the visible Jehovah. He hath undertaken for all that concerns the welfare of his body, the church, both in time and eternity. He it is that hath by his blood purchased her redemption, and recovered her from all the ruins of the fall. And being separated and set apart from everlasting by sovereign grace, however scattered during this time-state through the world's wide wilderness, and exposed to the prowling beasts of prey, and hunted on the dark mountains by men or devils, nothing can change their first and original connection. They are still the Lord's sheep, and never were or can become the world's goats. Jesus acknowledgeth them under all their wandering circumstances. They are his. He calls them as such, "my sheep." And he promiseth to feed them. He saith, "I will feed the flock of shaughter, even you, O poor of the flock," Zech. xi. 7. They are a little flock. But Jesus bids them "fear not, for it is their heavenly Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom," Luke xii. 32. They are loathsome in the world's view, and "hated by the world, because they are not of the world, but chosen out of the world," John xvii. 14. Nevertheless in Jesus's sight, they are a beautiful flock, Jerem. xiii. 20. And when the Lord hath delivered them out "of all places where they have been scattered," and brought them all home to himself and his fold, the Lord will "rejoice over them with joy, and rest in his

love evermore." He hath said in a way of promise, "Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God," Zeph. iii. 17; Isa. lxii. 3.

We shall be enabled, under divine teaching, to have clearer views of this subject, if we follow the footsteps of our most glorious Christ, in this affectionate and endearing character of his, the Almighty Shepherd of his flock. And if the Lord the Holy Ghost brings both writer and reader of this little tract, under the unction of his anointings, so as to give us spiritual and scriptural apprehensions of the infinite glories of Christ's person, and the infinite suitability and completeness of his salvation, (for neither can be understood by mere natural teaching, 1 Cor. ii. 14.) then will each for himself enter into the discovery of the greatness and loveliness of our most glorious Christ's character in this pastoral care and attention to his sheep, and find cause to bless the Lord, that as the wanderers from the flock never return of themselves until sought after by their shepherd, so the strayed sheep of Christ is and must be brought back by Christ himself. As the Lord hath said, so is it the felicity of his people to know in their own souls, the experimental fulfilment of the Lord's promise; "For thus saith the Lord God! Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day."

The first and leading point in confirmation of this divine doctrine, is the certain knowledge the Lord Jesus hath of all the persons of his sheep-fold. "He calleth them all by name," John x. 3. As the Lord said to Moses, so in effect doth the Lord say to every individual of his mystical body: "For thou hast found grace in

my sight, and I know thee by name," Exod. xxxiii. 17. Yea, it is in the very charter of grace, as the apostle worded it: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. And indeed, how should it be otherwise? Are not all the individual persons which were chosen in Christ, by the decree of the Father, given personally to Christ, and declared to be "members of Christ's body, of his flesh, and of his bones?" Eph. v. 30. And did not Christ receive them as such personally and distinctly? Are not their names said to be "written in the Lamb's book of life?" Rev. xxi. 27. Did not the Lord Jesus accept them as his own, and declare that the great object of his coming in redemption, was "to give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him?" John xvii. 3. And doth the prophet, taught by the Holy Ghost so to record the blessed scripture, doth he not say, that "the flocks shall pass again under the hands of him that telleth them?" Jer. xxxiii. 13. And could this have been said, but upon the presumption that the flocks have all passed under his hands before? Nay, could any of those declarations have been made in reference to our most glorious Christ, unless it be admitted at the same time as an unquestionable certainty, that the Lord Jesus knew all and every individual of them personally; engaged for all, and would accomplish for all what he had undertaken? But wherefore do I speak of these soul-refreshing truths in a way of question, when it is so fully ascertained in a luminous brightness through the holy scriptures, as the light of the sun at noon-day! The Son of God in our nature, hath died for them, shed his blood for them, hath washed them from their sins in his blood, hath risen for them, ascended to heaven for them, is gone to appear in the presence of God for them, ever

liveth to make intercession for them, and hath promised to come again and receive all of them to himself; that "where he is, there they shall be also!" John xiv. 3. And could any of these precious things have been said or done, had not the Lord Jesus the most perfect knowledge of all the persons of his people? Would any one for a moment venture the daring presumption that the Lord of life and glory did undertake to do and suffer such things for persons he knew not; and left the whole at a peradventure concerning the eventual consequences of his great salvation? Oh! Lamb of God! how very sweetly and powerfully doth that blessed promise of thine, now in the very moment of writing, come again with renewed warmth to my heart; "All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me; and he that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out," John vi. 37, 63. The Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, knoweth all and every individual of the persons of his sheep-fold.

Let us pass on to the second branch of the subject. Upon the presumption that our most glorious Christ knoweth all the *persons* of his people, it will follow, that he knoweth no less all the *circumstances* of his people. And here unfolds to our contemplation (though our researches go but little way in the inquiry) the outlines of the mysteriousness of the divine government of the Lord's church and sheep-fold, while sojourning in this wilderness we are passing through, until the Lord takes us home to himself in glory. From the history of the church, as appears from that part of it which former ages have had their being in, and the account of whom we have read, that the Lord hath "set the bounds of his people, (as Moses in his days observed) according to the number of the children of Israel," Deut. xxxii. 8. Hence, the people of God were appointed to arise in the different periods of the

world, and to succeed one another as soldiers on the march, or as troops of pilgrims on their journey. And as the *persons*, so the *circumstances* of Christ's fold were alike in the knowledge and appointment of him, "who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working," Isa. xxviii. 29. Hence in his divine ordination, it was decreed *when* and *where* each was to be born in *nature*, and *when* and *where* in *grace*. Under what circumstances in life to be provided for, in outward accommodations for the body, and under what trainment if any in inward nurture, by means of grace for the soul. All and every minute event connected with his church were in his appointment, and such as should minister to his glory, and his people's welfare, in the covenant "ordered in all things and sure."

And when from these *general* observations, we advance to more *special* and *particular* situations, in complexion and character, which distinguish one from another, the Lord's people; and recognize, as we are constrained to do his Almighty hand, "who directeth all things after the counsel of his own will;" the contemplation puts on a further aspect of mystery, which, while it involves the mind in an endless inquiry, baffles all investigation. Who, indeed, but the Lord himself, that "searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins of the children of men," can account for the various features of the human mind? Amidst the universal depravity of our fallen nature, in which the whole mass is alike involved, and equally corrupt before God; all alike the subjects of inherent sin, and all alike in guilt from original transgression; yet what a diversity of character. We behold some constitutionally mild, gentle, affectionate; we see others naturally morose, churlish, and unkind. There are some (if we may so speak after the manner of men) that as far as *natural* religion teacheth, are diligent in their attendance on the worship of God. There are others who are despisers of the word of God.

Hence, while the former fancy themselves like the young man mentioned in the gospel, to have kept all the commandments from their youth; the latter, like the prodigal son in the parable, "have spent all their substance in riotous living." And yet, from an authority not to be questioned, we are taught to conclude, that while remaining in a state of unrenewed nature, they are all alike remote from the kingdom of God.

Neither must we stop here in our contemplation of this diversity, and the Lord's perfect knowledge both of their persons and characters. For to sum up the mysterious statement, it must be further observed, the call of God amidst this diversity to the knowledge of himself, is as inexplicable as any other part of the subject. We behold some gathered out of the rubbish of nature, whilst others, in the moral parts of conduct apparently unexceptionable, passed by. Some taken from their earliest youth to know the Lord, whilst others left to old age; and yet, as the sequel hath proved, both alike the objects of everlasting love, and of sovereign grace. Hence we read of a Timothy, who from a child had known the scriptures; while the thief on the cross was never brought to the knowledge of the Lord until the dying hour. Some, who from the time of their first calling, like John, leaning by frequent communion, as it may be called, on Jesu's breast, and others, like the church of old, of whom the Lord said, "my people are bent to backsliding," Hosea ix. 7. But all alike by nature in original sin and the shadow of death; from the great mass of which the Lord gathers his people, because the church as well as the world are fallen into sin. Hence, therefore, the Lord Jesus, as in the former observation was proved, knoweth all the *persons* of his people, so doth he equally know all their *circumstances*. Here indeed is the marvellous part of the subject. The Lord's people by the fall, are scattered through the world; but they do not belong to the

world; they are in the midst of many nations, but "they dwell alone, and are not reckoned among the nations." They are like the fleece of Gideon, moist with the dew of heaven, when all the earth around is dry; and they are dry, under the divine shelter, when all the earth is deluged with the flood," Judges vi. 36 to 40. And while, as the Lord saith of his sheep, they are scattered, and wandering over the mountains, not knowing their high connections in the ancient settlements of eternity, and by reason of the fall, "living as without God, and without Christ in the world;" yet the promise of the Lord holds good through all, "Ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel! And it shall come to pass in that day that the great trumpet is blown, they shall come which were ready to perish," Isa. xxvii. 12, 13. No doubt we must say, and indeed we cannot but say, "this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes," Ps. cxviii. 23. And it seems that the Lord expects it should be so. "For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, if it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it be also marvellous in mine eyes? saith the Lord of Hosts," Zech. viii. 6.

But, thirdly, these preliminary observations bring with them every full and complete testimony, when we take into connection with them what was predicted of our most glorious Christ, and the features whereby he should be known, when he came to tabernacle in our flesh, and to assume and to carry on the sweet pastoral office of our Shepherd. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young," Isa. xl. 10. If we examine the several particulars here stated of the shepherd, and look into the history of our dear Lord in the days of his flesh, we shall discover what an exact description it forms, under the several bear-

ings of character given to the tender conduct of our Lord towards his people. "Feeding," and "gathering," and "carrying," and "leading," include every part of service in the life of a shepherd; for neither of these offices can be performed, but by a constant attendance in the sheep-fold, and a perfect knowledge both of the persons, and of the state, and situation, and wants of the flock. And, agreeably to this, we find the Lord Jesus himself, in the days of his flesh, assuming this very character of a pastor to his fold, and describing his attention to the whole of his people, by the very marks here delineated. "I am the good Shepherd, (said Christ); the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep: I know my sheep, and am known of mine. And the Shepherd of the sheep is he to whom the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers," John x. throughout. Here the Lord gives us an interesting view of his sheep-fold in high order. Here is the church in her recovered state; the flocks in their several stations, and age, and degrees, brought into the fold. The sheep-fold opened by the Holy Ghost to the Shepherd; the sheep known to him, and he to the sheep; and every one called by name, the Lord going before them, and they following him; and having a clear discernment of the good Shepherd who giveth his life for the sheep; distinguished from all false pastors, whose voice they know not, and will not follow. All which is answerable to the prophet's description of "feeding," and "gathering," and "carrying," and "leading;" and beautifully manifests the correspondence of scripture. In like manner, the Lord speaks to his church

in one of his love-songs, "Behold, thou art fair, my love! behold, thou art fair! thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are shorn, which come up from the washing, whereof every one bare twins, and none is barren among them," Song iv. 2. And such is the whole church of Christ, when recovered and brought into the fold, and kept by sovereign grace, in all their various characters, both the lambs, and the young ones, and the sheep of his pasture; when "according to his mercy he hath saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour," Titus iii. 5, 6. And in allusion to that part of Christ's sheep-fold, which yet are not called, but are "wandering through all the mountains, and upon every high hill;" the Lord Jesus considers them no less his sheep, and in the close of this his discourse, saith of them with equal regard, "other sheep I have which are not of this fold, (not being yet called and brought into it) them also I must bring; and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd." How much in point are those words of Christ, and in what strict analogy is the doctrine to the whole tenor of scripture! Yes, the flock of Christ, and the wanderers from his fold, are as truly his, and as truly beloved, as those fenced in by sovereign grace. And though they are the scattered, yet are they the Lord's scattered. They are as much Christ's before they are called, as they are after. And it is of all such Jesus saith, "I must bring!" Why must? Because "of all the Father hath given him, he hath lost none." Moreover, they are part of himself; and "whoso toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye," Zech. ii. 8. Neither is this all; for the Lord Jesus undertakes, not only for their being called and gathered out of all places, "where they have been scattered, in the cloudy and dark day;" but the Lord guarantees for their everlast-

ing safety, both in himself and the Father. "My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one," John x. 16 to 30.

But fourthly. While those views of our most glorious Christ, as the Almighty Shepherd of his sheep, are in themselves most blessed in confirmation, that in the first call of his grace, and the final safety of his fold, it is his sovereign act to feed and gather, to carry and lead, and do all the kind offices to the whole flock of a Shepherd; there are a great variety of cases, which are of a peculiar nature, and require peculiar attention. Methinks I hear some who are ready to conclude for the truth of what hath been advanced, in relation to the safety of the Lord's fold, while living under the Lord's presence, and garrisoned within the fence of the Lord's inclosure; but what consolations such will say, can be gathered from thence for any of the flock which have leaped over the barrier, thrown up by the kind Lord for their safety, and have been worried by the beasts of prey, on the dark mountains, and have neither power nor ability to return; yea, and as it should sometimes seem, have not a wish or inclination to return to the great "Shepherd and Bishop of souls!" This is a question of great interest, which to answer fully and satisfactorily can be only the province of him, "with whom is the residue of the Spirit;" and who alone "can enlarge Japheth, and persuade him to dwell in the tents of Shem," Gen. ix. 27. Nevertheless, while going on scripture ground, under the humble hope that the God of scripture will bless and own his word, to the spiritual minds, and understandings, and consciences of his distressed ones; I venture to think, that the Lord hath made provision for all his

flock, and for the restoration of such of them as have wandered from him. His love being an everlasting love, is not subject to the ebbings, or flowings, as the tide. Amidst all our changings, he saith himself, " I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed," Mal. iii. 6. As this is of all subjects the most momentous to the circumstances of the fallen and strayed sheep of Christ, and the particular and express design of this little tract, I would beg to call up a more particular attention. It may be, in the Lord's pleasure, to bring it under the eye of some one or other of his afflicted ones, in such exercises. And if the Lord command his blessing, sure I am, the language of every recovered lamb of Christ, brought back by Christ to his fold will be, " He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

And here, to compress as much as possible a subject of such magnitude within a little compass, I shall beg to consider the whole and every case of the sheep departed from the fold, under one and the same character. For however diversified in their departure, by greater or less marks of obliquity, a longer or shorter absence, yet one general feature belongs to the strayed, and the wanderer, and the backslider. Neither can either of himself return, until brought back by sovereign grace. Never will the sheep in nature come back to the sheep-fold from the mountain whither he hath strayed, until the shepherd hath found it out. And in like manner, the wanderers from Christ's fold will feel no grace in themselves to return, until grace from the Lord hath entered their heart.

I stay not either to enter into all the particulars that might be enumerated, respecting the aggravated cases which more or less are found in all. The numberless, nameless situations of evil, would fill a volume, were the awful departures even in a single individual brought

forward to view. I will take for granted, what perhaps the major part of backsliders would be free to confess, namely, that they have fallen into deeper waters of sin since they knew the Lord than before. I have known such, in the calls to sick rooms during the many years exercise of my ministry. And I have read also of others in the sacred word of God, much to the same amount. But what is the upshot of the whole, when summed up? Namely, this; what is man, yea, the best of men, in his highest attainments, if left to himself a moment? Oh what a feather to the wind of temptation! what a prey to the lusts of his own corrupt nature! what a bubble to himself, when forming any thing in his own strength! Let any child of God, yea, let every child of God, who hath been brought acquainted with the "plague of his own heart," but look into himself, and in the current of a single day call to mind if he can, what passeth and repasseth, in the multitude of vain thoughts, and vain words, and vain actions; to say nothing of the greater inlets and outlets to evil; and what must his conclusion be but this, if divinely taught, that they and they only are safe, which are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time," 1 Pet. i. 5.

But what a ray of light breaks in upon the soul, in the darkest seasons, if the Son of God who hath proclaimed himself under those tender and endearing characters in the words of his servants the prophets (part of which are in the title-page of this little tract) makes the same proclamation of himself in the sinner's heart. His language is to the wanderers on the mountains, and upon every high hill, "Behold I, even I, will both search and seek them out." Observe he takes to himself the whole efficiency of their salvation; for he waits not their seeking to him, but he will seek for them. Are they scattered? let them be told that he will

search them out. He saith, " Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off; and say, he that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he, Jer. xxi. 10, 11. Are they diseased? He saith, " I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick," Ezek. xxxiv. 16. In short, there is no case so desperate, no unworthiness so aggravated, no backsliding so awful, but what the Lord in his sovereignty hath a remedy for, to suit all the circumstances of his sheep-fold. For it is his grace, not their deservings; his glory, not their merit; which is made the standard of his favour towards them. In salvation, the sluices of everlasting love are broken up and opened; and they flow without restraint, and without interruption for ever. The whole language of the Lord is the opening of the heart of the Lord, when he saith, " I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely," Hosea xiv. 4.

I am well aware, however, that some there are, among the strayed of Christ's fold, who from unbelief and the temptations of the enemy, are so accustomed to write bitter things against themselves, as not heartily, and cordially, to enter into the spiritual apprehension of those gracious proclamations of our most gracious Christ. They will be ready to acknowledge the great blessedness of such scriptures to the cases of others, but cannot see the suitableness of their application to themselves. And during the paroxysm of despair, concluding their state to be such as never one before was in, they " refuse the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely!" And like the deaf adder, of whom this is spoken, they must and will remain so, until the Lord pronounceth the soul-quickening word,

" Ephphatha," and gives to them " the hearing ear, and the understanding heart." And let me be heard when I say, the Lord never fails of doing this to all his people. And the wanderer, and backslider of every degree, let it be remembered, are all his people. For from whence have they wandered and backslidden, but from the Lord? Could they be said to have done this, in either case, had they not known the Lord? Moreover, how aggravated soever the case of any one of this description may now seem to be, no state after being called by sovereign grace to the knowledge of the Lord, can be as bad as the case was before. True, you complain that you are not alive, as in times past you have been, to the enjoyment of divine things. But recollect, though you are often, yea, perhaps you will say, you are always in dying frames, but before conversion you were dead in trespasses and sins. You complain that the great enemy of souls is frequently worrying you with his temptations; but do not forget, that there was a time, when like Mary Magdalene, you was wholly under his controul. You say your case is so singular, that there is nothing parallel to it, in the history of the Lord's people in any age. What think you of Jeremiah? chap. xx. 14. of David? 2 Samuel xi. of Jonah? chap. ii. The conclusion that Jonah made of his sin and punishment was, that he was " in the belly of hell." And perhaps you will say that you have in idea anticipated the same; and have at times felt as if there. But say, even if there, would not your language be as Jonah? " I said (said he) I am cast out of thy sight, yet will I look again toward thy holy temple." And in the midst of all your complainings, do you not sometimes look towards Christ? Doth not his sweet name sometimes escape your lips? And could it escape your lips if the love of Christ was not in your heart? Nay, say, suppose like Jonah you thought yourself like him in hell, could you do as those

which are there are said to do, " who though scorched with great heat, blaspheme the name of God, and repent not to give him glory?" Rev. xvi. 9. Would not their very blasphemies distress you, for God's honour and the name of the Lord be still dear to you? Nay, would you not say, as some of old did, " I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost; Oh! seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments." I shall find great cause to bless the Lord, if in mercy the Lord should condescend by so feeble a means to accomplish a great end, in making these observations minister to the Lord's glory, in comforting any of the Lord's wandering ones, and bringing them to different views of the divine clemency, and the almightiness of sovereign grace. Methinks I would have all such precious souls call to mind, that the Lord Jesus is more interested in the salvation of his people, than any of his people can be for themselves. For the first and predisposing cause of all, is Christ's glory, not our salvation. We have indeed all the blessed *effects* of it, but these are but effects; for his glory is the *cause*. The crown of redemption depends upon our most glorious Christ's bringing his redeemed, every one of them safe home. As Moses told Pharaoh, so the church in the name of Christ may say now; " There shall not an hoof be left behind," Exod. x. 26. I only add a prayer to this purport with the church, and say, " Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant; make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

## VIII.

THE HEIRS OF PROMISE. A TRACT; WHICH UNDER DIVINE TEACHING, MAY BE RENDERED PROFITABLE TO THE CHURCH OF GOD AT ALL TIMES; BUT ESPECIALLY IN THE PRESENT DAY OF A CHRIST-DESPISING GENERATION.

And who are "the heirs of promise?" And what is the inheritance of such an heirship? If the reader be as anxious as the writer to inquire, and both writer and reader be happily under divine teaching in the inquiry, the word of God will give a most satisfying answer. And sure I am, that of all subjects this is the most momentous. In the present awful day of a Christ-despising generation, when we behold empires convulsed at the very centre, and princes and great men of the earth undergoing vast changes; what can a child of God propose to himself, so soothing and consolatory as the discovery, that he belongs to "a kingdom which cannot be moved," Heb. xii. 28. And it is said of Luther, that upon every occasion of exercise from without, he called his friends within, and sung his song upon Alamoth, the 46th Psalm. And every "heir of promise" may do the same, when "the Spirit beareth witness to his spirit, that he is a child of God." All the promises of God in Christ Jesus are songs, composed by God the Spirit, for all his hidden ones to sing "in this house of their pilgrimage," Psalm cxix. 54. And what shall stop the Alamoth of their rejoicing, who have the promise both "of the life that now is, and of that which is to come?"

And what is the inheritance of those "heirs of promise?" Oh! it is immense; incalculably glorious and eternal! It exceeds the utmost imagination of the human mind to conceive; and would tire the whole body of angels to write down the contents. And what endears it to the warmest affection of "the heirs of pro-

mise," is the assurance of its unalterable, everlasting, and blessed nature. And, moreover, that it is confirmed by all the testimonies the Lord can give, or man receive. God in his threefold character of person hath made over all his divine attributes and perfections for the security of it. The charter of grace runs in these words: "I will be to you a God, and ye shall be to me a people," Exod. vi. 7. And each glorious person comes forward in his almightiness of character, to manifest some special and distinct act of personality by way of confirming their love to "the heirs of promise." God the Father is said to have chosen the church in Christ before the foundation of the world; adopted the church in Christ as children to himself; and of accepting the church in Christ, "to the praise and glory of his grace," Eph. i. 4—6. God the Son hath manifested his love in the personal acts of betrothing the church to himself for ever, Hosea ii. 19. and redeeming the church from the Adam-state transgression of the fall, Col. i. 20. And God the Holy Ghost manifests his personal love and agency in the gracious work, by regenerating the church in every individual member of Christ's mystical body, which are by nature "dead in trespasses and sin," Titus iii. 4—6. Eph. ii. 1. And while these distinct and special works of grace afford, as they were evidently designed to afford, somewhat for the mind of the "heirs of promise" to lean on, in forming suitable and becoming apprehensions of the nature of the Godhead thus existing in a threefold character of person, they no less confirm the unity of the divine essence in the whole resulting from one and the same mind and will, and thereby carry with them an incontestible evidence to that glorious truth, that, "there are three which bear record in heaven, the Father, the word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one," 1 John v. 7. The act of one, is the purpose and pleasure of the whole, in which all unite, and yet all have

their distant personality, and like the beautiful colours of the rainbow, though we clearly can discern the distinction, but yet so sweetly blended are they, that no eye can discover where the one begins, or the other ends.

And as the security of the inheritance is so formed, as to be liable to no possibility of failure or change; so the fulness, the greatness, the quality, and comprehensible nature of it, is similar in proportion. It contains eternal life, with all its preliminaries. Temporal blessings, spiritual blessings, eternal blessings. Though in consequence of sin, all the comforts of the present life, in our temporal enjoyments, are tinged with imperfection, yet, to the "heirs of promise," even the afflictions of life, in some measure, lose their asperity. For, as the curse of sin is removed by the redemption in Christ, so the affect of sin also is in a great measure done away. The indenture between sin and death is torn in two. The hand-writing of ordinances is cancelled. Hence afflictions do not hurt the "heirs of promise" more than wintry dispensations, by keeping back the bud in reality injure the fruit, or the pruning knife by lopping off superfluous branches destroy the tree. "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to God's purpose," Rom. viii. 28. And in respect to spiritual blessings leading to eternal enjoyments, every thing which can constitute happiness, is in the inheritance of the heirs of promise. "This is the record, (saith John) that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." Observe the expression. He *hath* given it. We have it now, by virtue of our union with Christ. "For he that hath the Son hath life," 1 John v. 11, 12. Change of worlds make no change of interest. Right and title are the same in both. Christ and his heirs of promise are the same in both. It would be, in my apprehension, little short of blas-

phemy, in supposing "the heirs of promise" to be less the objects of Jesus's love, than those of his redeemed who now inherit the promise. For are they not equally the gift of God the Father? Are they not equally the objects of his espousals, and the purchase of his blood? And are they not equally the objects of the Holy Ghost's love in their regeneration? And hence, all spiritual blessings suited to a life of grace, are the inheritance of "the heirs of promise" while here below; as eternal blessings are now the enjoyment of the church above, and will be theirs also when they have passed the childhood of their being, and arrive at full age, and when, with the whole church, they come to the life of glory with the saints in light. How sweetly doth one of the apostles sing of this blissful state of the church, in that precious scripture—"Blessed (saith he) be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last times," 1 Peter i. 3, 4, 6.

But if such be the promise itself, the question again recurs, who are the heirs of it? To answer this infinitely interesting inquiry, I would observe, that if we were to trace the subject from beginning to end, by way of passing over the whole ground of evidence in proof who they are, we must run back to eternity; for very certain it is, that from the first moment Christ, the great promise, was set up, "the heirs of promise" were set up with him; for they are said to be "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," Rom. viii. 17. "The heirs of promise," are the heirs of God's everlasting purpose. They were formed with Christ in the womb of the eternal mind, Isa. xlix. 1. before that they were

formed in the womb of nature; and of consequence, still more remote in the after stage of the womb of grace, John iii. 7. But I must not amplify these pages in this little work. In answering the important question, who are "the heirs of promise?" it will be more suitable to our present purpose, to take up the subject nearer home, and limit our inquiry within the period of time, than run for proofs into eternity. We shall accomplish our purpose, if, by the effect, we prove the cause; as we shall, by tracing the cause down to the effect. Peter's advice comes in here very admirably, when he bids the church to make "their calling and election sure," 2 Peter i. 10. For, if I can prove my calling, I thereby prove fully my election also. "For, saith the Holy Ghost by Paul, whom he did predestinate, them he also called," Rom. viii. 30. Hence, if the reader, in his own instance, can clearly ascertain the precious assurance of being savingly called by grace, from "darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan unto the kingdom of God's dear Son;" he hath the most decided testimony which can be given of being among "the heirs of promise;" for this holy calling is the unerring character of a child of God. To this purport is the assurance of the apostle, "who hath saved us, (saith he) and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9.

In answering therefore the important question, who are "the heirs of promise?" we may begin the subject at regeneration; for where this gracious act of sovereign love is wrought, it carries with it at once the most decided proof that can be given, that here is an "heir of promise." Indeed this work of God the Holy Ghost, though not the first in point of order, is the first in point of knowledge in them, concerning all that relates to "the heirs of promise." For the child of God is

wholly ignorant of his high birth and quality, until the sovereign act is wrought. Though by the Father's electing love, and Christ's betrothing grace, he is an heir of a "kingdom that cannot be moved;" yet like the infant son of an earthly prince, he is altogether unconscious of his right by inheritance, while remaining in the childhood of unregeneracy. But when "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in his heart," the nonage of imbecility and ignorance is done away, and he hath then given him "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus," 2 Cor. iv. 6. Here then is the first feature of character, whereby we may discern "the heirs of promise." And what tends yet further in the confirmation of it is, that this gift of God the Holy Ghost is expressly declared to be on this very account: "and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father," Gal. iv. 6. I beg the reader to notice this. God doth not send forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts to make them sons; for that they always were, though, while in their unregeneracy, they were sinful sons: but it was because they were sons the Spirit was sent; and which was in the provision of the covenant promises. See, in proof, Isa. xliv. 3.—Psalm cx. 3.—Isa. lix. 21. I mention this the rather, and insist on it the more, because it is no uncommon thing to hear men call God's children, while in their unregenerate state, heirs of hell and children of the devil. Both which are false. For never in any one moment of their lives were they such, even in the worst days of their unregeneracy. Servants of hell, and wearing the livery of the devil, indeed they were: but never related to him. Reader! ponder well these things. Contemplate this first feature of character in "the heirs of promise." This at once proves both their sonship and heirship: for by this sovereign act of grace their spiritual faculties, which were

all before "dead in trespasses and sins," are quickened into all the actions of spiritual life. The new heart is given them, the ear is unstopped to "know the joyful sound." The eye is enlightened to "know the hope of Christ's calling." "The lame is made to leap as an hart; and the tongue of the dumb to sing," Ezek. xxxvi. 26. —Psalm lxxxix. 15.—Eph. i. 18.—Isa. xxxv. 6. And to crown all, and to make the whole of this sovereign work truly blessed, "the heirs of promise" are themselves altogether as much passive in this new birth by grace, as mankind all are in the old birth of nature; for all the regenerate in Christ are born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 13. I have been more diffuse in giving the outlines of this feature of character, which mark "the heirs of promise," than I should have been but for its importance, as it is the foundation of every other. Where this is found, it becomes the most infallible standard of character. This proves a grace union with Christ. This manifests a oneness with Christ, in putting on Christ. And the Holy Ghost bears testimony to an interest in Christ wherever this feature is found, when he saith, "and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," Gal. iii. 29.

I pass on to another feature of character in "the heirs of promise," which distinguish them from the world, and which ariseth out of the former; namely, a spiritual appetite to things which are divine and spiritual. There is in this particular a great analogy between nature and grace, when called into being. And hence the apostle adopts the figure of "new-born babes desiring the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby," 1 Peter ii. 2. The prophet hath much the same when he saith, that Zion shall be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations, and milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory," Isa. lxvi.

11. Hence "the heirs of promise" prove their new birth, and their adoption character, in the awakened desires and spiritual appetites of the soul. They hunger and thirst after Christ and his righteousness; and they know what it is when Jesus goeth before them in ordinances and means of grace; and when in his word, at his house, at his table, "they go in and out, and find pasture." Some, indeed, move higher, some lower, in these privileges. Some live in the full enjoyment of a justified state before God in Christ, and know what it is to have access at a throne at all times "in the grace wherein they stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God," Rom. v. 1—5. Others through the slenderness of faith and coldness of affection, do not come up to this standard. Nevertheless, it is not their feelings, neither the strength or weakness of their faith, which form their birth-right. They who sit, as Lazarus did, at the supper with Jesus, or are "borne on his sides and dandled on his knees," have but one and the same relationship with those who gather the crumbs only under his table, or "wash his feet with their tears." It is not what our desires are, but what Christ is,—not man's merit, but God's grace,—which distinguish the right of God's children: for, as the Holy Ghost hath said in relation to Abraham, so will it follow to all the spiritual seed of Abraham. "If the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. And if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect," Gal. iii. 18. Rom. iv. 14.

Another delightful feature of character in the "heirs of promise" is, that of education and trainment in the school of Christ. It might well be supposed that the heirs of such an inheritance, when *new-born* and daily *fed* in the family of their inheritance, would be "nurtured and brought up in the admonition of the Lord."

And hence we find among the old testament promises, that this was to form a token of God's care of his people: "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord," Isa. liv. 13. And under the new testament dispensation, Jesus himself makes this learning of the Father a sure and unerring mark of their coming to him, John vi. 45. Reader! do not overlook these features of character in the heirs of promise, for they are drawn with the Lord's own pencil. New-born in Christ, fed by Christ, living upon Christ, justified in Christ, and taught of Christ; what can more decidedly shew "the heirs of promise!"

Let me add one feature more that "groweth in grace," which, in the word of God, is connected with "the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. iii. 18. is a sure and unerring mark, by which the heirs of promise are discoverable. But where this growth in grace is, it differs wholly from the feature of the pharisee. "The heir of promise" groweth in grace by growing more lowly in his own eyes, and Jesus to his view, from his growing knowledge of him, becoming more exalted. The pharisee's growth is in greater love with himself, in doing, as he calls it, all the good he can for God. "The heir of promise" is looking wholly for acceptance in the finished salvation of Jesus Christ; the pharisee, in a progressive work of holiness in himself. The *one*, the higher he advanceth in the divine life, the lower he layeth in the dust before God: the *other*, the less he needs according to his estimation from Christ in his fancied improvement, the higher he stands in his expectation of reward. With whom truth is found those solemn words of God will shew: "That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God," Ezek. xvi. 63.

There are several more features of character which distinguish "the heirs of promise;" but these are among the most prominent, and if attended to will be found fully equal under God the Spirit's teaching, to shew to every child of God "whose he is and whom he serves," Acts xxvii. 23. And very sure I am, wherever those features of character mark, in strong lines, "the heirs of promise," the children of the bondwoman will be found now, as much as ever, to mock the children of the free. The Hagar race are not extinct, but numerous; and their bitterness increaseth every generation. Be it so. What saith the scripture? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free." Now, then, let all "the heirs of promise," who through grace can discover their features of character, say with the same holy joy as Paul did, "So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free," Gal. iv. 22, to the end.

Hath the question been satisfactorily answered, who are "the heirs of promise?" And is the inheritance to that heirship so immense, so unspeakably blessed, "so ordered in all things and sure?" Reader! if on the presumption the Lord hath made you a partaker with "the heirs of promise," I will beg to conclude my little tract with a short observation, the doctrine of which must, in that case, strike your mind with peculiar blessedness.

Some men call in question the everlasting safety of "the heirs of promise;" and in the unguarded freedom of their crude judgment, presume to term the final perseverance of the saints an unscriptural and highly dangerous doctrine. Reader! hear what God saith on this subject. "When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself." First, mark this astonishing grace and con-

descension of God. It was not enough in God to promise, but the Lord will confirm it by oath. Confirm what? his unalterable love. And because the highest of all possible authority shall sanction this oath, God swears by himself. Next remark the extent of this promise, confirmed by oath. "Now to Abraham and his seed were these promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many, (not to the seed of Hagar and Keturah,) but as of one; and to thy seed, which is Christ." And that no possible mistake should arise, here also the Holy Ghost hath added, in the same scripture, for the comfort of all Christ's heirs of promise, that "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," Gal. iii. 16, to the end. Now look, once more, to the grace and condescension of God towards Abraham's seed, as well as to the patriarch. "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise (mark that, the heirs of promise) the immutability of his counsel, (Isa. xlvi. 10.) confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast," Heb. vi. 13, to the end. Now here we have the High and Holy One, who inhabiteth eternity, declaring his willingness, yea, his willingness more abundantly, not only that Abraham, but that all "the heirs of promise," might know, and be convinced of, and depend upon, his unalterable, unchangeable love, and the immutability of his counsel doth that which strikes with astonishment the whole intelligent creation of God. He promiseth—he swears to that promise—and he doth both that "the heirs of promise," made heirs by his choice, without any one cause but his own free will and pleasure moving him to it, shall have a strong

consolation, and depend upon his promise for the accomplishment of his blessing. Those heirs of promise in Christ only, are chosen in Christ, given to Christ, to be holy and without blame before him in love, " before the foundation of the world; before the children were born, or had done good or evil, that the purpose of election might stand," Eph. i. 4—6. 2 Tim. i. 9. Titus i. 2. Rom. ix. 11. And is it possible that any man, after a declaration, a promise, an oath of Jehovah; yea, the Lord's willingness, and that more abundantly, to say, to promise, to swear, to " the heirs of promise," their present, their everlasting safety, and blessedness in Christ; in the face of such things to call the doctrine highly unscriptural and dangerous? Reader! what think you of the " heirs of promise?" Above all, what think you of the Almighty promiser God in Christ?

## IX.

MY BIRTH DAY. A TRACT, AFFECTIONATELY ADDRESSED TO EVERY CHILD OF GOD, ON HIS BIRTH DAY.

I awoke with the earliest of the morning after a night of mercies. The first thought which crossed my mind, was that which ought to be the first and last in every man's mind who hath a sense of distinguishing mercies; I mean God's mercies in Christ. Yea, Christ himself is mercy himself, and the first-born in the womb of every mercy. For whatever of mercy shines as a star with any brightness, must be from him; and he himself the sum and centre of all, forming one full and glorious constellation.

What a mercy, (I said to myself, in the first moment of recollection) hath been the distinguishing goodness of my God over me this night! How many, in one part or other of the world, who with me retired to rest in perfect health, when the shades of the last night closed in upon, and covered the earth, are now no more? What numbers are there on beds of languishing? What a sleepless night have many, like Job, found? Job vii. 3, 4. And who shall count the groans, and agonies, and heart-aches, and head-aches, in the one great hospital of the world, which the records of the past night hath noted?

But I called to mind in the same moment, that this was my birth-day morning also. And what additional motives for thankfulness arise from that source? How many years have run out, since tidings were brought to my father, saying, "a man-child is born unto thee, making him very glad!" Jer. xx. 15. And although the prophet, when reeking at the moment under the pressure of sorrow, deprecated the day of his birth, yet without the coming forth from the womb of nature, in the Adam-fall transgression, the church of God, in

every instance, could not have known the new birth of grace, " through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Well it is for me that I sprung from the fallen stock of the *earthly* man! or I never should have known the blessedness of restoration in the *heavenly*. Jesus would never have been so dear to me as he now is in *regeneration*, had I not first known and first felt the plague of my own heart by *generation*.

Doth my reader enter into a clear apprehension of this statement? Take it thus. Let it for a moment be supposed, that when God chose the church in Christ, before the foundation of the world, " to be holy and without blame before him in love," he had prevented the whole evils of the fall, in the present time-state of the church, by creating them, and taking them to glory in Christ at once; in this case, it is true, they would never have known sin. And some, for aught I know, may think that there would have been nothing to have regretted on this account. But I am free to confess, such thoughts are not mine. Paul was taught by the Holy Ghost, to thank God that the church had been the servants of sin, Rom. vi. 17. And I find cause to bless God for the same. What happy creatures the church of Jesus might have been in heaven, without passing through the Egypt-state of sin in this earth, I know not. But one thing I know, that upon this ground, one sweet attribute of God would never have been known: and one most endeared name and office of Jesus would, to all eternity have been always wanting. *Mercy* would have found no room for exercise towards misery; for objects of misery would never have appeared for the richest displays of mercy to have been manifested upon: and the church in heaven could never have sung the song of redemption to God and the Lamb. Reader! what say you to this? Would the happiness of eternity have been as great, had you and I known God only in those divine perfections of love, and

wisdom, and power, and goodness, and holiness, and yet never known any thing of his mercy, as now, when from the depths of sin we are led to know and feel the depth of divine mercy manifested in Jesus Christ? Would heaven have been as heavenly as it now is, if salvation had never been known, and the Son of God never loved as a Saviour? Oh! the unspeakable blessedness that God our Father, who is "rich in mercy, and for the great love wherewith he hath loved us," in order that he might afford the better opportunity for the display of those riches, allowed the objects of his everlasting love to fall into misery, that his mercy might be magnified in their recovery, and his dear Son be known to them, and be loved and adored by them, not only as their Head and Husband, but also as their Redeemer and Saviour!

But to return—I recollected that it was my birthday. There are two highly interesting views in which the recollection of my birth-day affected my mind; namely, of the birth-day in nature, and of the new birth in grace. I stay not so much to inquire how many years in the world's almanack I count since the first cry from the womb at my birth, indicated that one more of Adam's fallen, helpless race was born, as to ask my own heart, how many days I can number since the call of God, "from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan into Christ's kingdom?" We do not calculate God's love by our calendar of time, because that love itself is everlasting. Here there is neither beginning nor ending. The child new-born, "shall die an hundred years old," Isa. lxv. 20. But it is the vastness of the change from whence we are to form the *data*. The stride from nature to grace, from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, is greater than all the after steps the Lord leads on his people by. If the Lord was pleased to make the new-born child in Christ, immediately after that birth, as high as the highest angel

in light, the transition would not be as great as when first calling the sinner from death to life, and from sin to salvation in Christ. And in that call is folded up in one rich cluster, eternal glory with all its preliminaries. Here are no calculations therefore of time. The love of God in Christ, hath no arithmetic such as we use. God loves not by the day. His is an everlasting love: an ocean for ever flowing, and which hath neither bottom nor shore.

But I said that there are two views of our birth-day, which are highly interesting; that of nature, and that of grace. And as the former is essential to the latter, and by the Lord's ordination must precede it, both claim our attention; and, under divine teaching, cannot fail of being profitable in the review.

I begin with that in nature. It is no small mercy, when in the scale of creation we find ourselves of that nature which the Son of God hath dignified by taking an holy portion of it into union with himself. Who shall mark down the price of that grace in such an act, when it is said, "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham?" Heb. ii. 16. It is our participation in human nature, which forms the ground-work for our union with Christ. The man of whom we read, was truly taught of God to form a right judgment of distinguishing grace, when at the sight of a toad, his heart melted within him, that in the mass of matter the infinite Creator had made him man, and not a reptile. And comparative statements, with gracious minds, form some of the sweetest instructions in life.

The birth in nature hath many mercies opening to our view in every direction, to awaken and call forth into exercise all the finer feelings of the mind. I will mention a few. First, how born—I mean when perfect in all the parts of body and of mind. The child of God, when brought under divine teaching, cannot

walk the streets, and look around and behold the numberless objects every where appearing, without finding cause of thankfulness in the defects of others, to mark God's distinguishing mercy towards himself in the perfection of his own. Every blind eye, and every crippled limb, speak louder than sermons; and all the instances we meet with of idiots, and deficiencies in their understanding, make appeal to the heart, in a language similar to that of the apostle, "who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" 1 Cor. iv. 7.

Secondly, Where born—opens also another source for the most heartfelt praise. Surely it is among the highest tokens of divine love, that our lot is cast in this blessed land, where God is truly known. And though in the present Christ-despising generation, rivers of tears may well run down over the cheeks of the mourners in Zion, in seeing and hearing the filthy conversation of the wicked from day to day; yet, blessed be God, he hath not removed the golden candlestick out of its place. And still there is a remnant according to the election of grace, which the Lord of Sabaoth hath left us, that we should not be as Sodom, and made like unto Gomorrah!

Thirdly, Of whom born—and this is not among the smallest mercies of a gracious God. A child of many prayers, like Hannah's Samuel, comes into life with distinguishing favour. For what indeed can be more so, than when piles of petitions have been lodged in heaven by godly parents for their children before they were born. And who shall say what multitudes of the most fervent prayers of the faithful for their little ones have been afterwards answered, when the petitioners themselves have long mouldered in the grave? Sure I am, that every prayer awakened by grace, shall, sooner or later, find the return in mercy. For they first come from God, and they are presented to God. And such

as godly parents leave behind them here below, mellow and ripen according to the Lord's time, until the pregnancy be fulfilled; and then the appointed season of the harvest of prayer bringeth forth the sweet fruit. Let this statement in relation to the children of the faithful be fairly calculated, and put into the opposite scale of the children of the ungodly; and then let any man say, how distinguishing the mercy, of whom born. Look at some of the families of the poor. They have no education but that which is corrupt. Lives of prophaneness, sabbath-breaking, and every evil work. Look at numbers in higher life; and what is it better? To make their children rich, to aggrandise their names, and "to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof;" these are their only objects of pursuit. Both ranks are alike prayerless and graceless, "living without God and without Christ in the world!" They are all hastening to the same place; only with this difference, the former walk, the latter ride. The poor man in his ungodliness, trudges on the high road on foot; the rich man, in his ungodliness, coacheth it on in ease. But they both meet at the end of the way. And where is that? Nay, the question is its answer. Every man goeth to his own place, Acts i. 25.—iv. 23.

Perhaps, however, some may say, that this was not their case to come from godly parents. To which it may be answered, so much the more distinguishing the grace of God, in calling his people from haunts of ungodliness. Men of the world pride themselves in being the first of their family. The Roman had a right notion of this, as far as it relates to the life that now is, who being reminded by one that had degenerated from his ancestors, of his mean origin, made this reply:—'I am,' said he, 'the foundation of my house; and thou art the ruin of thine.' And how much more so in relation to the life that is to come, when God, in the

riches of his grace, calls one from among the ungodly, as he called Abraham from the idolatry of his father's house, to make him the founder of many generations.

Fourthly, I might add to this account of the blessings in nature and providence, in considering how the child of God is born, where he is born, and of whom he is born; that it is a further mercy, the age and period of the church when he is born. I esteem it an unspeakable grace not to have been born in times of past ignorance in this land, when "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. And however singular it may be considered by some, and but little regarded by others, while I desire to bless my God that the time of my nativity was not cast in those barbarous ages of popish fables, which so many hundred years darkened this country, I bless him also that I had the happiness of being born before the present day of what, in the modern vocabulary, is called the age of reason, but more properly might be named the age of infidelity. To live in it is one thing, but to have been educated in it is another. It is in my view a solemn consideration, that our little children, from the false refinement of the times, are now taught their A B C in books which, for the most part, are more suited to keep from them the knowledge of the Lord, than to make that season of infancy, where first impressions are strong impressions, the time of bringing them into acquaintance with the Lord. It was my happiness to have been taught my letters in the first books of learning, which gathered all the lessons from the scriptures. And now I find cause to bless God for a mercy which at that time I was unconscious of the value. And I take occasion in this place, from long experience of the blessedness of this plan of teaching, earnestly and affectionately to recommend to all godly parents and teachers of schools, (if perhaps any such should read this tract,) to have their little charge taught from the scriptures of truth only, "which are

able to make them wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. iii. 15.

But if so much may be said, (and infinitely more might be said,) in respect to the view the child of God hath to take in the departments of nature on his birth-day, what a boundless prospect opens before him when he contemplates his birth-day in grace? What angel's arm shall be found competent to mark down in suitable memorandums, the immensity of the blessings, both temporal, spiritual, and eternal, to which he is begotten, when from the Adam-state of sin, he is "born again of that incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever?" 1 Pet. i. 23. It is storied of Henry the Fourth of France, that on the celebration of one of his birth-days, he expressed himself to this purpose—'I was born,' said he, 'as on this day; and no doubt, take the world throughout, but that hundreds were born in the same day with me; but out of all those numbers, I am perhaps the only one whom God hath made a king. How signally am I indebted to the peculiar bounty of God's providence?' This was admirably said, and the more so, because said by a man brought up under the ignorance of popery. But what may a child of God say, in relation to his birth-day in grace? When the new birth in Christ takes place, in every individual instance, the happy partaker is made an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. He is, in the truest sense of the word, a new-born "king and priest unto God and the Father," Rev. i. 6.

Reader! what are your views of regeneration, or the new birth? This is the great point to which all the scriptures of God have respect. This is the centre from whence every thing momentous in the gospel comes forth. Here is the hinge on which all the grand events of salvation turn. Without this there can be no entrance into Christ's kingdom. All the flaming profes-

sions in the world, where this is not, go out like the candle in the socket, in darkness, and only leave the smell of an ill savour behind.

Besides, there can be no claim to the least covenant blessing where this is not—"Ye must be born again." This stands at the very door of Christ's church, in characters too plain to be mistaken, to forbid all entrance to comers who have never experienced it. And it were to be much wished, that in the present awful day, churches professing godliness would make this the standard, as the great Head of the church hath himself appointed, for the only admission to his fellowship in church communion, John iii. 3—5.

When it be considered what high privileges the child of God is begotten to, in his high calling, in the day of quickening grace, (which is the same thing with regeneration,) it is impossible to contemplate the merciful act, in any one of the many volumes of blessings contained in it, without being melted in heart, and overwhelmed under the sense of divine goodness. It is this act of love which calls forth the child of God into the whole life of grace; as the birth in the Adam-state, brings forth all her children into the whole life of nature. In the day the Lord the Holy Ghost quickens the spirit which was before "dead in trespasses and sins," we are made "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." All things are then given to us which "pertain to life and godliness," 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. Before this mighty act is wrought, there is not a spiritual blessing the child of God can claim. And although chosen by the Father, and given by the Father to the Son before the foundation of the world, and betrothed by the Son from everlasting, Eph. i. 4—6. yet it is by the regenerating work of God the Holy Ghost, that we are first brought into the spiritual life to cry, Abba,

Father! and introduced into the enjoyment of all the blessings of the covenant. Then we, "which were before afar off, are brought nigh by the blood of Christ." Then we, "which had not obtained mercy, have obtained mercy," Eph. ii. 13; 1 Pet. ii. 10; Gal. iv. 6. All the vast pile of sins which reached towards heaven, and had its foundation in hell, is at once done away. For such speaketh the scripture: "And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses," Col. ii. 13. And together with the forgiveness of all sins, the Lord connects with it all favour, "being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus," Rom. iii. 24. And what endears the whole, in the vastness of the mercy, is that nothing on our part hath the least influence to the promotion of it: the child of God in grace, as much as the child of God in nature, is altogether passive in the deed. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures," James i. 18.

Let the reader pause over the subject. Let him, as it concerns himself, consider, and well consider the interesting circumstances of both the births, in nature and in grace; and then see what his own views of them are. I will suppose that this little tract meet his eye on his birth-day; and I will from that supposition, venture to ask him, how he means to celebrate his birth-day? As the two periods of the birth in nature and the birth in grace, for the most part, occupy the minds of different men very differently; so their different views of things are shewn by the diversity of their conduct. Carnal minds know no other way of celebrating their birth-day, and every other festivity, but in carnal enjoyments. When Herod, on his birth-day, made "a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief

estates of Galilee, no doubt, every thing of luxury and sensual gratifications attended the splendid feast. But the dancing and mirth of this carnal crew, ended not but in the murder of the holy servant of God, John the baptist, Mark vi. 17, 29. And in instances where there is no such cruelty, yet where the celebration of any man's birth-day is directed only "to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof," what are the employments of the day, and the follies of the night? Cards and dancing, revellings and surfeitings, are sad returns to the God of all our mercies, that an immortal soul hath lived and counted so many birth-days in nature!

But let the reader figure to himself the child of God, who through divine mercy, can mark down in the annals of his history, his birth-day in nature, and his new birth in grace. Behold him in the return of one of those days! What passeth between God and his own soul, in his retirement, may be better conceived than represented. But how he spends the day in his family, is manifested to all around. Taking his little ones with him before the throne, and presenting himself and them before the Lord, in prayer and praise, in supplication and thanksgiving—Oh, what a loveliness in such a sight! If it be said, (as that it is said,) in beholding the love of brethren, "how good and how pleasant it is to see them dwell together in unity;" may it not be said, how blessed is it also to behold a father of his family, recounting with them together before the Lord, the mercies of his love. Surely what the Lord hath said upon that occasion, holds good also here. "For there the Lord commanded the blessing, and life for evermore," Psalm cxxxiii.

We are told in history, that seven cities contended about the birth-place of one man, though that man was an heathen. Not so, however, is the register of God's

children. "Of Zion it shall be said, that this and that man was born in her." The Jerusalem which is above, is "the mother of us all," Gal. iv. 26. And what makes the whole of this divine registry so truly blessed, is that "the Lord himself, when he writeth up the people, shall count that this man was born there," Ps. lxxxvii. Yes, Jesus the God-man, was born there; and so are all his seed. Reader, farewell! Do you hope to be found in this royal registry? Yes, if so be "the Lord hath called you by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name," Isa. lxii. 2. To such the Lord speaks in the gracious words of his covenant love: "Even unto them will I give, in mine house, and within my walls, a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters. I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off," Isa. lvi. 5.

## X.

### ABBA, FATHER.

It was many a year after that the Lord had wrought a work of grace upon my soul, before that I had any idea of the very great preciousness contained in this cry of the renewed heart, "Abba, Father!" I did not enter into the full sense and meaning, God the Holy Ghost designed his church from the use of it. I had, indeed, read the sweet word again and again in the scriptures where it is found, and observed the special use of it by the Lord Jesus himself, in the memorable season of his agony in the garden, Mark xiv. 36. Yea, I had, as far as my recollection carries me, preached from it to the people, and have found, at various times, much blessedness in it; but never till lately had I discovered the gracious privilege the Lord most specially intended from it, in giving it to his children.

Reader, I take occasion to remark from hence, (and the more so as it meets me so forcibly in my own insignificant history) how slender our attainments are in the divine life after many years, and (as it should seem) of close study. Sure I am, the progress in nature's school, even among the dullest capacities, is swiftness itself compared to the advances of the child of God in grace. The Lord Jesus hath said, and his people at length discover it, "the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light." My this day's improvement in the divine knowledge, acts but as a torch to discover my yesterday's ignorance. Great part of our supposed acquisitions might be better placed in a parenthesis; for the whole arithmetic of human understanding, as far as relates to divine truths, may be summed up in the apostle's conclusion—"if

any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know," 1 Cor. viii. 2.

But to return. It is evident from the name Abba, derived as it is from a root which implies both the nearest of relationship, and the strongest of affection, ( as I have elsewhere shewn in my Poor Man's Concordance) that in the use of it by the child of God, in his drawings nigh to the Father in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost intended much nearness and enlargement of soul in holy communion. And if as we are told, concerning the manners and customs of the east) the ab, or head of a family, was never addressed by any but his own children in the name of abba, no servant presuming to the use of it; how very striking doth the special confinement of it to children endear it to the child of God, when at regeneration God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, "whereby we cry, Abba, Father! the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God?" There is somewhat most exceedingly precious in this view of the word. No servant in the noble families of the eastern world, dared to call their lord abba. And no unregenerate, in the princely court of Jesus, can claim the relationship of Abba, Father. It is "because ye are sons, (saith the Holy Ghost, by his servant the apostle) that God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts;" not to make you sons, for that you were before, but to confirm and make known your sonship, and then the cry of Abba is awakened by grace in the soul.

Reader, let me request your attention to this interesting subject; for it is indeed the most interesting of all subjects. And if so be the Lord the Holy Ghost hath wrought a saving change by his regenerating grace in your heart, so that you can discover your own personal right to the use of it, I venture to assure myself, you will find with me great blessedness in it, and delight to

adopt it in all your approaches through Christ, "by one Spirit, unto the Father," Eph. ii. 18.

But where, and from whence, shall I begin the subject, in speaking of the vast and infinite privileges belonging to the child of God, in the right of calling God Abba, Father? Surely I can begin from no place but from whence God himself began, even from everlasting. For speaking of the subject of the headship of houses, the Lord thus expressed himself. "At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people." And what date doth this declaration of God bear? Even from all eternity. For so it follows: "the Lord hath appeared of old unto me." Of old! "Yea, (saith the Lord) I have loved thee with an everlasting love!" Jer. xxxi. 1—3. And what is implied in the word everlasting, but a state that hath neither beginning nor end? The love of God, as Abba to his people, is of equal duration with himself. To suppose the being of God before any purposes of God, would be to suppose with it somewhat new in the divine mind: a thing impossible! for this would be in violation of his unchangeableness. Hence the love of God began with the very being of God. And what the Holy Ghost hath said of God's mercy, may be said with equal truth of God's love; that it is "from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children," Psalm ciii. 17.

And in further confirmation of this most blessed truth, we find the new testament record bearing a corresponding witness to this old testament charter, where it is said, that God "chose the church in Christ before the foundation of the world;" that he adopted his people "as children, by Jesus Christ, to himself;" and that he "accepted them in the beloved:" Eph. i. 4, 5, 6. And I beg the reader to observe, that these three great and gracious acts of the Father's love, are spoken of as

so many distinct acts in confirmation of that love, and carrying the same date with them, namely, "before the foundation of the world." They are all in Christ, and by Christ, and for Christ's sake. But then they are in consequence of the church's relation to the person of Christ, and not here spoken of as resulting from the work and offices of Christ; for these things of God's choosing and adopting, and accepting, are all prior to the foundation of the world, and consequently before sin. The redemption by Christ's blood follows, when, in the time-state of the church, that glorious event was accomplished, Eph. i. 7. But these former blessings are eternal blessings of the Abba love, "according to his own purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began!" 2 Tim. i. 9.

But secondly—what endears this Abba love to the hearts of his children, and carries it up to the highest pitch the mind is capable of conceiving, is, that all those gracious acts of God our Father were all purposed in Christ, and all given to us so as to come from and through Christ; and they increased in all that vastness of accession, both in blessedness and in security, in flowing to us from God's dear Son, the Son of his love. The most delightful of all thoughts, because it is the most unanswerable assurance of God the Father's eternal love of his church, is folded up in this precious view, that every act, and every tendency of his grace in that act, towards the individual members of Christ's mystical body, were all purposed and appointed in respect to him, the glorious head. Our very being, and our well-being, were all chosen in Christ, and for the glory of Christ. The church, in the same moment formed in the divine mind with Christ, was formed for Christ, and given to Christ. "This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise," Isa. xliii. 21. When the regenerated child of God hath learnt somewhat of those blessed things, of what the Holy Ghost

relates in his scriptures concerning those ancient settlements of eternity, he is enabled through divine teaching, to form, however faintly, some apprehensions of the fatherly love of God. He discovers that all the purposes of God, concerning the church, are in Christ, and for Christ's glory. And that as in eternity those counsels were formed, so in the time-state after, God so arranged all that should follow, as might best promote Christ's glory and his people's happiness. Redemption itself, with all its blissful effects, became so ordered, that while ministering to our salvation, should yet have an higher object, in ministering to the greater glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. And both these great ends, together with God the Father's glory directing the whole, are read to us in that sweet scripture: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord," 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. "Of him"—that is, God the Father; all you are, you are in Christ. God never had a design concerning you but in Christ; both your being and your well-being, from one eternity to another, were all in Christ. And "who of God"—that is, Christ is of God, and of God is made unto you all that he is made, and all that you can ever need in time or in eternity—"wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." So that here we have comprised, in the bosom of this short but comprehensive scripture, what Christ is to his people, and by whom the appointment; and of consequence, as all is from the Lord, so all the glory must be to the Lord. Reader, what are your views herefrom of the everlasting love of Abba, our Father? And what do you think, and feast upon, in the contemplation of that love, when you add to it, that all you have been from all eternity in God's view, when chosen in Christ; and all you now are, in the time-state of the church, when

redeemed and accepted in Christ; and all you shall be in the world to which you are hastening, when found one in union with Christ? Oh, how sweet and powerful, under those views, doth the cry of "Abba, Father," go forth from the soul toward the mercy-seat of God in Christ, in those hallowed seasons when led by the Holy Ghost to the throne, and the Spirit witnesseth to our spirits that "we are the children of God!"

But we must now, thirdly, by way of still heightening to our view the testimonies of God's fatherly love, come down to the time-state of the church, and behold the wonderful provision made by that love for the recovery of our nature from the Adam-fall transgression, by the personal obedience and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here opens a new volume of wonders, which could have been formed only in the infinite mind of God; and of which the utmost stretch of all the intelligent creation, can grasp but a little part. That the whole plan and purpose of it, had the glory of God's dear Son in view, as the first great object, more than our salvation, is beyond all doubt. Our redemption is an immense blessing; but Christ's glory in that redemption is infinitely greater. And what could set forth in equal representation, God's love to Christ, and to his church in Christ, as the death of his Son? Had God manifested his fatherly love to the church, when before the foundation of the world he chose the church in Christ, and had taken the church to heaven at once, without passing through this time-state here below; this would have been a love of God passing knowledge! But here is more! For having chosen the church to be holy and without blame before him in love, and having adopted it to himself as children in Jesus Christ; and by the Adam-fall transgression laying a foundation for their recovery in Christ, that by a way so astonishing as redemption, and that in the blood of his Son—here is a testimony of God's fatherly love

which infinitely transcends all creature apprehension. The children chosen in Christ shall be vessels of mercy, as well as vessels of glory. And hereby God adds the manifestation of another divine perfection to his fatherly love, and is therefore most blessedly called "the Father of mercies;" for he begets mercies, and eminently the mercy of redemption, being the Author and Giver of all, 2 Cor. i. 3.

Fourthly. Regeneration, which is the personal act of God the Holy Ghost, and without whose agency the children of God, though chosen in Christ by God the Father, and redeemed by God the Son, could never have been quickened into spiritual life, is also said to be the gift of God the Father, through "the resurrection of Christ from the dead," 1 Peter. i. 3. And what I beg more particularly to remark upon the present occasion, is the cause for which God quickens the spirits of his children; viz. because they are children. "Because ye are sons, (saith the Holy Ghost by Paul) God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father," Gal. iv. 6. Here is a beautiful testimony to the truth of God, and of a double nature. God the Father sends the Spirit of his Son into the hearts of his children, because they are children; and God the Holy Ghost quickens the child of God by his discriminating grace, that the child may know God is his Father, from this testimony of the divine power. Hence, the whole persons of the Godhead concur and co-operate in this gracious design; and God the Son as Mediator, confirms the relationship when he saith, "behold I, and the children whom the Lord hath given me," Isa. viii. 18.

Fifthly. As the original and eternal purposes of God, in choosing, adopting, and accepting in Christ before the foundation of the world, are the result of his fatherly love and redemption by Christ, and regeneration by the Spirit, arise out of the same source; so all the

dispensations appointed for his children in the time-state of the church, in nature, providence, and grace, (leading to glory in the eternal state to follow) are every one of them arranged with the same infinite wisdom, and carry with them the same tokens of his fatherly love, ordered and ordained in Christ "before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9. To enumerate the instances of God's love as a Father, and a Father in Christ to his church, would be the subject of endless volumes; and after all, the ten thousandth part could not be marked down by the pen of men or angels. But running from one eternity to another, and including all the events which take place in the intermediate time-state here below, the Abba love is manifested in watering the church every moment, and keeping her night and day, lest any should hurt her, Isa. xxvii. 3. Having predestinated his people to "the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, and to the praise of the glory of his grace," they shall have every thing in correspondence to this fatherly design. They shall have the fittest person in body, whether beautiful or deformed; the fittest situation in life, whether poor or rich; the fittest yoke-fellow in the married state, if so appointed, whether affectionate and kind, or untoward and cross, to exercise their graces. That God and Father that gave his children so fit a Saviour as his dear Son, will "with him freely give them all things," Rom. viii. 32. The parents in nature from whom they spring, the time when born, the place where born, the manner how, and the person from whom born—all are arranged by the Abba love, and with a depth of wisdom which cannot err. They shall be fed and nourished, educated and trained, live in their Father's house, sit down there as at a Father's table, and go in and out as children of his family. And when from the corruptions of a fallen nature, like wayward children, they run from his love, and offend the Lord; though these things induce great

sorrow of soul, they shall hear the voice of the Lord in this Abba love rising in mercy above their misery, and speaking in that sweet scripture, "But I said, (saith God) how shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? And I said, thou shalt call me my Father, and shall not turn away from me!" Jer. iii. 19. with Jer. xxxii. 40. In a word, the fatherly love, and wisdom, and power of God, in one invariable plan of government, is so carried on, and his eye is upon them so unceasingly, from everlasting to everlasting, that nothing can arise to counteract his first, original, and eternal design concerning them. They are the children of his everlasting love; the children of his everlasting purpose; the children of his everlasting promise; the children of his gift to his dear Son; the purchase of Christ's blood; the fruits of the Holy Spirit; and the children of his praise. Hence, God himself is engaged to carry on and complete his own eternal purposes, in their everlasting safety and happiness, in bringing them through every difficulty, bringing them out of every danger, and bringing them into his everlasting kingdom. "This people (the Lord saith) have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise," Isa. xliii. 21.

Reader, pause and ponder well the subject; and then say, what are your views of God's love? Remember that I am stating the question, as addressed to the heart of him in whom God the Spirit hath put the cry of "Abba, Father." To such a one I would say, hath God the Father's love been manifested towards you from everlasting, so as to choose you in Christ, adopt you among the children to himself in Christ, accept you in Christ, and all these precious love-tokens given you in Christ before the foundation of the world? If these eternal transactions concerning you in Christ were the first of God's thoughts towards you, shall they not be the first in your's towards him? Did God the Father so love you as to give you to his dear Son, and

never purpose a thought concerning your being and your well-being, but in and for the Son of his love; yea, so ordained your redemption when you were fallen, that while accomplishing thereby your salvation, he might yet more promote his Son's greatness: and shall not such proofs of God's love call forth your warmest praise to God's glory? Do you see your blessedness and safety in Christ by the Father's appointment; and shall not he who from the beginning hath chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, be always uppermost in your affection? Do you know that you have no being but in Christ, no holiness but in Christ, no security but in Christ, for grace here, and glory hereafter? and shall not he who appointed all, gave all, hath blessed all, both head and members, have the praise? Can you truly love Christ, and not as truly love him who gave you Christ? Oh, the blessedness, the preciousness, the high, the unspeakable privilege of God's children, in their every day, and all the day, being enabled through grace to draw nigh the throne from their union with Christ, and crying, "Abba, Father!" The very lisping of this hallowed, sweet, and endeared name, even by the least of his children, is blessed. Tender parents among men in nature, love to hear the first call of their children. And how much more must a gracious God and Father in Christ Jesus, delight to hear the first and last breathings of the awakened and regenerated child in grace, when from sending forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, they cry "Abba, Father! the Spirit witnessing with their spirits, that they are the children of God?"

I have endeavoured in the Abba hymn, to express some few of the breathings of the soul on this subject. It is sung occasionally in my church, and I hope according to the direction of God the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

## XI.

THE IMMOVEABLE KINGDOM, THE SUBJECT OF PECULIAR BLESSEDNESS TO THE LORD'S PEOPLE, AMIDST ALL THE DEAD AND DYING CIRCUMSTANCES OF THIS MOVEABLE WORLD.

The mind of every one renewed by grace, wants somewhat continually to lean upon. And when under divine teaching, the Lord hath brought the child of God into an apprehension and enjoyment of the everlasting love of God to the church in Christ, as the *cause;* and the unchanging purposes of God to the church in Christ, as the *effect;* he hath then found a source of never-failing comfort to bear him up, and bear him on, amidst all the changes of time, until the Lord shall bear him home, and bring him in to his everlasting kingdom. He discovers enough in this divine treasury to make him happy in time, and happy to all eternity. There are two verses in scripture on those subjects, which though short, yet sweet, contain in their bosom the great and leading features of God's grace towards his people. They may be considered as the whole charter of grace; yea, the very sum and substance of both testaments. The first is in Jeremiah, xxxi. 3. where the Lord is represented as saying, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Hence we discover that this everlasting love, is the first cause and spring of all that follows: and *therefore*, (observe how blessed this *therefore)* all the acts of divine favour which follow, are effects. The second verse is that in Malachi iii. 6. "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Here again we discover that the unchangeable purposes of grace towards the church in Christ, arise out of his everlasting love to the church in Christ

and therefore (as before) the sons of Jacob (meaning Jacob's seed, the church) are not consumed; but "saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation," Isa. xlv. 17 Reader, have you duly pondered these things? If so, what know you of them? Oh! how sweet, how inexpressibly sweet and precious, to trace all our mercies to their source, and discover the whole to be the result of God's everlasting love, and God's everlasting purposes towards the church in Christ! How doth the soul lay low in the dust before God, when we are fully taught that nothing of our worthiness moved God, or our unworthiness restrained him to those acts of sovereign mercy! And as the Lord's love is from himself, so his purposes can receive no change. Deservings or undeservings are not taken into the account. God's love and God's purposes were before all. The one great object all along pursued, as far as relates to the church in Christ, and from one eternity to another, is read to us in that glorious scripture, where it is said to be done that the Lord "might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus," Eph. ii. 7.

But to those delightful views of every thing that is blessed in God's everlasting love, and God's unchanging purposes, the child of God finds a sweet addition, when through grace he discovers his own personal interest in them. This makes the meditation blessed indeed! "And such honour have all his saints," Ps. cxlix. 9. Look through the whole bible and observe, how like a golden thread, the testimony of this personal interest, is found in the history of God's people. In a day of universal depravity, it is said of Noah that he "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Here is a proof of God's everlasting love to his person. And the next account we have of this man is, that "Noah was a just man in his generation." Here we have the testimony of God's purposes towards him in consequence of it,

Gen. vi. 8, 9. In like manner, Moses; "Thou hast found grace in my sight, (said the Lord to him) and I know thee by name." And what was the effect from this cause? Even as in the instance before mentioned; "I will do this thing also, (saith the Lord) that thou hast spoken," Exod. xxxiii. 17. So again in the case of Israel; "Since thou wast precious in my sight, (saith the Lord) thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee; therefore (observe the sweet *therefores)* therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life;" (or as the word is, and the margin of the bible renders it, "people for thy person,") Isa. xliii. 1—4. See also numberless other sweet instances; Jer. i. 5—8. Dan. x. 11. Luke i. 15—28. John x. 3—14. Acts ix. 15. Thess. i. 4—10, &c. Reader! what correspondence have you personally with this precious truth? Think what rapture the church felt, when under the impression of it she sung her love song; "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine," Song vi. 3.

One word more. To crown the whole, when the child of God is enabled to carry this doctrine into daily practice, and through grace can and doth live upon the privileges of a "kingdom that cannot be moved," because he knows he belongs to it, amidst all the moveable occurrences of a moveable world, whose whole buildings the Lord is taking down—Oh! the unspeakable blessedness of such a state! And this every child of God is supposed to do; yea, and would do if living *above* the world, by living more *out* of the world, in daily, hourly communion with God in Christ. Reader, what are your views on this part of the subject also? Have you truly learnt that the world was made for the church, and not the church for the world? And do you know that he who chose the church in Christ before the foundation of the world, chose all the events connected with the church which should arise in the world, purposely for the church, and as should best

suit the Lord's glory, and the church's everlasting welfare? Have you so far studied the subject from scripture, under divine teaching, as to know that not an event, from the overthrow of empires or establishing kingdoms, to the numbering of the hairs of his children's heads, but what are all ordained, and so directed that they shall all minister to the church's good, and his honour? Have you duly pondered these things, so as to live and act in the faith of them? Oh, what a thousand heart-aches and head-aches would the child of God be spared, if he carried this conviction into daily practice! Hence we learn that the birth in nature of God's children, and their new birth in grace, are all arranged with such consummate wisdom and love, as if each child of God was the one, and the only one calling forth the Lord's attention. The Lord having chosen them in Christ before the world, watches over their persons for every event to follow them in the world; so that the parents in nature from whom they are to arise, the time when, the place where, the manner how —all are so ordered as no synod of angels could appoint with equal attention and regard. And hence, in all and every minute circumstance connected with their whole time-state—in all the departments of nature, providence, and grace, their conditions, their places, their connections, their exercises, and warfares, are all marked with a precision that cannot in a single instance be mistaken. The *why* and the *wherefore* one is poor, wretchedly poor in this world's goods, and another called to a rich station; some beautiful in form, some ill-shapen and defective in body; some with very slender understandings, some with larger intellect; some deeply drenched in sorrow, others less affected—all are exactly where each ought to be in ministering to the great purposes of God. They who have the spots of God's children, are placed according to the counsel of God's will; and like the innumerable wheels of a vast

machine, forming one and the same design, however apparently acting on opposite principles, are carrying on the sacred end of God's administration. The world is the place for the present time-state of their existence; here they are put, like children, under education. Every lesson given them hath a tendency to lead them to God. Shortly they will break up; the everlasting holy-days will come on; and Jesus will come himself, and take them all home to their Father's house. They belong to "a kingdom which cannot be moved." And even while they are in the world, they do not belong to the world. Hence the events going on in the world, are like the noise of distant voices in which they have no concern. And to a mind occupied with divine things, what signifies human attainments? To him who hath received "a kingdom which cannot be moved," what is it whether there be an eclipse of the sun, or an earthquake; whether a bubble burst, or whether a world?

Reader! if what hath been said may serve as an introduction to the subject proposed in the title-page, I shall have less ground to go over, in explaining the principles of the immoveable kingdom itself. The words by the apostle are very beautiful and expressive: "Wherefore, (saith he) we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." I beg the reader to remark with me the force of the word *wherefore*. It is like the *therefores* before noticed, arising out of some cause; and that cause, as the former, the everlasting love and the unchanging purposes of God in Christ. Hence on these accounts, we, that is, the church, are said to be receiving this stable, fixed, and permanent kingdom. And the receiving it, implies that it is all of gift and of grace. It cannot be the result of merit, nor the effect of labour, nor the reward of services; for the eternal nature of the kingdom manifests the eternity of the giver. And when it is

said, " let us have grace to serve God acceptably," it cannot be supposed that we can demand grace so to do. But the sense is, that as we receive the kingdom, the free gift of God in Christ, so we no less receive the grace of the kingdom from the same bounty. And both together, being made heirs of this immoveable kingdom, and receiving the grace of the kingdom from the great Author and Giver of grace, we are thereby enabled to " serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear."

Let us attend to both views of the subject; namely, the permanency of the kingdom, and the grace to serve in it. Surely it must be a blessed thing to belong to it. And we may say of the inhabitants of it, as the queen of the south did of the court of Solomon; " Happy are thy men; happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. And blessed be the Lord thy God which delighteth in thee." But if such things were suited to any of the kingdoms in nature, and which are tottering to their centre day by day, what gratulations might be supposed to hail every royal prince belonging to a kingdom of grace leading to glory, and whose foundation is for ever? If it was a mercy to hear the wisdom of Solomon, what shall be said of the blessedness of those servants who stand continually before the Lord Jesus Christ, " in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!" If it was so gracious in the Lord God to place Solomon on the throne of Israel, what everlasting love must that be in God our Father, to give the church Christ for our Lord, and to give his people a kingdom in him which cannot be moved, and in which the Son of God himself hath made all his people " kings and priests to God and his Father!"

Reader! Let me first call your attention to the view of this " immoveable kingdom." In doing which I shall compress within as little a compass as possible the whole

I have to offer, confining myself to the just mentioning the grand principles in which it is founded, without enlarging on the several points I desire to bring before you. Some few of the more prominent bearings are those which follow :—

As first. This immoveable kingdom is founded on the absolute decree of Jehovah, in his threefold character of person. It is his sovereign act. The church of Christ is his kingdom, founded on Christ, against which "the gates of hell cannot prevail." When God was pleased to go forth, in the manifestation of his glory, to his creatures, he purposed the whole in Christ. And together with the proclamation from the court of heaven of his intention, his almighty will was added in confirmation, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," Isa. xlvi. 10.

Secondly. The immutability of his counsel, and the everlasting duration of Christ's kingdom, received an additional act of grace, when both were confirmed to the church in Christ by the covenant engagements of Jehovah; in which all the high contracting powers, forming the unity of the divine essence, became pledged and guaranteed to each other, that "mercy should be built up for ever, and Jehovah's faithfulness he would establish in the very heavens," Ps. lxxxix. 2.

And thirdly. Fore-viewing and fore-ordaining all the events connected with and intended to bring in redemption, for the recovery of the Adam-fall transgression, Jehovah in his threefold character of person so ordained, that the kingdom which cannot be moved, should have more than ample recompense in the attack made against it by sin and Satan, in the vast undertaking and finished salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Very blessed and very precious is this part of the testimony to Christ's kingdom, in the immoveableness of it, from the scriptural account of the fore-knowledge and fore-ordination of God. For while the Holy Ghost by

Peter, in so many express words, saith that Christ was "fore-ordained as a Lamb without spot and blemish," to redeem the church, "before the foundation of the world;" very plain it is, that in the counsel of peace, before all worlds, the whole economy of redemption formed a part in the vast design of this church; and the fore-ordination of Christ as a sacrifice, implied the fore-ordination of the fall; and both, among other great purposes of blessing to the church, were intended to accomplish a yet higher view, in bringing in a more ample revenue of praise and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Fourthly, and lastly, to add no more. The recovery of the church, by the regenerating influences of the Holy Ghost, gives the finishing work to the permanency of Christ's kingdom. Every child of God, when renewed by grace, is made a receiver of this kingdom which cannot be moved. "He is made a partaker of the divine nature;" and to him are given "all things which pertain to life and godliness." Hence one of the apostles, in triumphs of holy joy, calls upon the church "to give thanks unto the Father, in having made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;" for that "he hath delivered us (said he) from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son," Col. i. 12, 13.

Reader! Shall I entreat you before we proceed to the second part of the subject, to pause over this first, and ask your own heart, from the evidences here stated, whether you discern in your own history any features of character of belonging to this kingdom? Are you enrolled among the free-born and new-born citizens of it? Do you know the King of it; acknowledge him for your Sovereign; bend your knee before him; speak the language of his kingdom; wear his dress; (I mean the robe of Jesus's righteousness) love the people of his

government; and prefer the interests of his Zion above your chief joy? These are interesting inquiries.

But those and the like questions will find means of a readier answer in prosecuting the second point proposed, namely, of the grace to serve in this kingdom which cannot be moved. "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." Let us have it, implies that there is already grace received. For in receiving the kingdom, together with it we receive the grace of the kingdom. Hence, therefore, when it is said, let us have grace, it means the renewings of grace. The phrase is similar to what is said concerning the continual comings to Christ. "And of his fulness (saith John) have all we received, and grace for grace," John i. 16.

Moreover. The first receiving of the kingdom is the receiving of grace; in fact, it is a pledge and an earnest of eternal glory. "The God of all grace, (saith Peter) hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus," 1 Pet. v. 10. The very first quickening of the spirit by the Holy Ghost, is the new birth of the heir of glory. The moment this is done, he breathes for the first time the air of this kingdom. He is instantly invested in the right of his inheritance, "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." He is enfranchised —a denizen of the kingdom. And although he hath it not in immediate possession because of his minority, yet it is now his by birthright, and will be his in possession when he comes of age. What he hath received is the earnest of the promised inheritance. He that gives grace will give glory," Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

Once more. In receiving the earnest of the kingdom by grace, we receive with it pardon of all our sins, and acceptance with God in Christ. It is a most blessed scripture to this amount, which the Holy Ghost hath given the church, by the apostle, when speaking of regeneration, and the forgiveness of all sins in consequence

of it, when he saith, "And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses," Col. ii. 13. Hence, saith the same apostle in another scripture, "ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 11. And what is the natural and unavoidable conclusions from hence, but that when regenerated sinners receive the kingdom which cannot be moved, they enter into all the privileges of the kingdom. The patent, under the broad seal of heaven, is made out in these words; "For whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified," Rom. viii. 30.

Lastly, to add no more. "Let us have grace!" Yes; for surely the Lord who gives grace to make an heir of the kingdom, will give grace to live suitably to the high calling of an heir of the kingdom. He that gives the greatest blessing will not deny the least. He that spared not his own Son, will he not with him freely give us all things? Some men seem to be dreadfully alarmed, lest too great a regard to the person and finished salvation of Jesus, should relax our attention to the precepts of Jesus; as if my love to his person would tempt to a disregard to his glory. Every principle of common sense revolts at the idea; and the holdings of grace prevents it. "If we live in the spirit," saith the apostle, "let us also walk in the spirit." Nay, hath not God our Father, when he chose the church in Christ, chosen the church to be holy in Christ without blame before him in love? And hath God chose the end, and will he not adopt the means? Will God's purpose be defeated by man's perversion? Oh, thou dear Lord Jesus! it is thy office to keep the feet of thy saints; "Thou will prevent them from falling; and

thou wilt present them faultless before the presence of thy glory with exceeding joy," Jude 24, 25.

Reader! Pause over the whole. You are here called upon to behold "a kingdom which cannot be moved!" You observe that a grace is given to the heirs of this kingdom, "whereby they may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." What are your views of the whole subject? Is it not high time for you to know whether you belong to it or not?

You need not be told that you live in a changeable world, yea, a dying world; and yourself in changeable and dying circumstances. You know not what a day, or what an hour may bring forth. If you look into houses or families, kingdoms or empires, all seem fluctuating. Both the world and the men of the world can promise you nothing. "It is a time of Jacob's trouble." Is it not a time of very serious concern? Doth not every thing seem to say, "Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest, because it is polluted," Micah ii. 10.

Advance a step further. There are but two kingdoms spoken of in scripture—the kingdom of the prince of this world set up against Christ, and the kingdom of Jesus this sweet verse speaks of, which cannot be moved. Is it not a subject of infinite moment to know to which we belong? There is not a third. There are no neutrals in this war. Oh, the immense, incalculable distance between Christ and Belial! between the heirs of a kingdom that cannot be moved, and the spawn of hell!

Children of God! see that ye live up to your high profession. Hath God the Holy Ghost called you with an holy calling? Are you passed from death to life? Is Jesus precious to you, and his kingdom dear? O then, let every thing in you and about you set forth that you have received a kingdom which cannot be moved. Bring into every day possession by faith,

what ere long you hope to realize by sight. Live upon Christ now, as you know you shall shortly live with him for ever. See that faith, though it doth not give you immediate enjoyment, yet gives you present claim. You have received a kingdom which cannot be moved. Live then up to the dignity of an heir apparent to that kingdom. Detach yourself more and more from all things here below. Manifest to all with whom you have to do, that you are but a stranger and pilgrim upon earth. Be in this instance a Rechabite, that when the Chaldeans come into the land, as unconnected with any, you may remove your tent, Jer. xxxv. 11. Oh, how truly blessed to sit loose to all things, and to live above all things here below. It was a striking message sent by a saint of God, when dying, to a great man, who would have amused him with his earthly amusements—'Tell him,' said he, 'I am going to a kingdom where few great men come.' Reader, farewell! think, I beseech you, amidst all the changing circumstances of a dying world, and dying men in the world, as you enter the new year of our Lord God, 1817, the unspeakable blessedness of receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved!

## XII.

THE ROYAL FAMILY: A TRACT PROPER TO BE PUT INTO THE HANDS OF EVERY ONE BELONGING TO HIS MAJESTY'S HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH: THAT UNDER DIVINE TEACHING, THEY MAY DISCOVER THEIR HEAVENLY ALLIANCE; AND THROUGH GRACE, LIVE UP TO THEIR HIGH DIGNITY IN CHRIST JESUS.

It is always blessed when at any time the Lord brings his people into the possession of some great and unlooked for favour, to trace it to its source, until we see the hand bestowing it. By this means it affords a two-fold sweetness. We enjoy the gift, and we bless the giver. The traveller through a desert, who unexpectedly finds a brook by the way; if with it the Lord gives the grace of discernment in the heart, to eye the Lord's hand in the Lord's appointment, (as Hagar did at the well, Gen. xvi. 7—14), hath a double relish. It becomes a repast both to soul and body, and the feast hath somewhat in it sacramental.

But we do more than this, for we run up to the very fountain head of all mercies, when we discover that all our blessings in nature, providence, and grace, from one eternity to another, spring out of our union with Jesus. Yea, sure it is that heaven itself, with all the felicities of the place, can afford nothing of real happiness but what is founded in our union with Christ, and our communion with God in Christ. To be thus known, and thus made everlastingly happy in Christ, is the sum and substance of all blessedness, whether in time or eternity. Men of the world carry themselves proudly to be great at an earthly court. And, if they can make out the smallest claim of relationship, even to the most remote degree, with any of the branches of any royal family; what consequence do they not assume upon it? But here is an affinity that is not barely royal but heavenly,

yea, divine. And he, from whom it is derived, and who hath made all his family kings and priests to God and the Father, "is not ashamed to call them brethren!"

Had I nothing further to tell the reader, of this royal family, than what I have said of the fact itself, and in the manner in which I have spoken of it, he might well be pleased with the relation. The very antiquity of it as an history, renders it the most interesting record ever written. But when through grace, the child of God can read his own ancestry in it; and in the several bearings, he discovers somewhat of a family likeness to himself, this endears it by every tie of affection. Oh! the unspeakable joy of soul, when we behold our names enrolled among that honourable number, who are called in the word of God, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people!" 1 Pet. ii. 9.

In tracing the first rise of this royal family, we must run back into eternity. The antiquarian, if true to his own principles, would find here a subject to call up his warmest regard. Indeed it is the only one of real antiquity. It hath its origin from God himself, and is set up from everlasting. The being, and well-being of this house, is in Christ. The charter of this kingdom is formed in the ancient settlements of eternity. All the subjects of it are princes of the blood. They are all of one name, and "which the mouth of the Lord hath named." All their armorial bearings are the same. The supporters, helmet, crest, shield, and motto, are of grace, and "the gift by grace," Rom. v. 15.—It may be well to consider yet further the origin of this royalty.

There could be but one immediate object for which God, in his three-fold character of person, was pleased to go forth in acts of communion with any of his creatures; namely, his own glory. Hence the song in heaven, "Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created," Rev. iv. 11. When,

therefore, for the purpose of this communion, God chose the church in Christ; every thing connected with royalty formed the church's dignity. It was chosen in Christ. And in point of antiquity, it transcended all, for it was chosen in "Christ before the foundation of the world," Eph. i. 4. yea, the relationship had another bearing, "being appointed to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ." So that the alliance had every thing to make it royal; yea, divine; for all the family became thereby at once, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

Together with these acts of sovereign grace, (which let it be remembered, were all before the foundation of the world,) God chose the church in Christ, that it should be "holy and without blame before him in love." This was the first and original design, though the blessedness of it, in respect to the ultimate object, was the last to be accomplished in the divine intention. The Adam-fall, which afterwards took place, (as we shall have occasion hereafter to observe,) could not militate to do away this eternal purpose. The lapsed state of the church in her Adam-fall of nature, gave occasion for the greater display of Christ's love in the recovery of her; but the first and everlasting union of Christ with his church, could neither be lost nor lessened by the fall. The church was still his, though fallen. She was no less his wife, though adulterous. The alliance formed in eternity could not be broken in time. As head and husband of his church set up from everlasting, he must continue the same for ever. Let this be marked in special characters among the records of Christ's illustrious house. Jesus when he betrothed his church, betrothed her in faithfulness for ever. When we come to prosecute the history during the time-state of the church, we shall see what a provision was made from everlasting, for the recovery of his church from all the evils of the fall; and how blessedly Christ cleansed his church from every defilement, that he might present

her to himself a glorious church, " not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but to be holy and without blame before him in love," Eph. v.

I detain the reader at this place, that he may pause over what hath been said concerning this royal family; and for the moment, before that we go down to the consideration of the subject, during the time-state of the church, ponder over the vast thought. What a prospect doth it open to our view into the eternal world? What greatness and dignity of character are hereby shewn to belong to our nature? What a sight must it have been when, to the infinite mind of God, the Son of God came up before him in our nature, and the whole multitude of his people, " which no man can number," came up with him! Christ, as the head and first-born among many brethren; and they, as the church whose names are " written in heaven, members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones?" He, the glorious representative; and they, subsisting by grace-union in him before the world. Reader! methinks I would for the moment indulge the contemplation. It is vast; yea, infinite. Let it be supposed, (though I confess I like not the supposition of what is impossible, and we know this to have been impossible,) let it be supposed that every individual body of the church could have been present at this view; and the church, with her glorious head, had been seen coming up before Jehovah; what would have followed? Would not every eye in the millions of the people, have been fixed on Jesus? Would not every knee have bowed before him? And would not, as with one heart, every tongue have exclaimed, in a full chorus of praise and adoration: " He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved," Psalm xlvii. 4.

Now let us come down to the time-state of the church. And here again, in the scriptures of eternal truth, we shall find the records of this royal family.

In prosecuting the subject, in our inquiries after this august house, we must begin at the creation; for in the first two sons of Adam, the father of the whole human race, we find in the youngest branch, the family feature of this stock. Indeed, here the Lord opened the line of discrimination, to mark "the precious from the vile." Abel is shewn by the Holy Ghost to have been of the household of faith, in the actions of faith; while Cain manifested that he was of that wicked one, and slew his brother, Heb. xi. 4; 1 John iii. 12. And thus, like a chain of so many links, the royal seed, through the history of both testaments of scripture, are discoverable as running on through the whole time-state of the church, uniformly being marked as the children of the kingdom, from the children of the evil one. Not in the line of nature, but grace. Not from father to son, in a succession of endless genealogies, but according to the power of an endless life. The Lord's people are expressly said to be born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 12, 13.

They are said, and by the Lord himself, to be not so numerous as the nations of the earth, but to be few in number. Neither did the Lord set his love upon them for their worth or deservings; for all along they are marked as children which are by nature rebellious. But the sole cause for which the Lord chose them was, in that "the Lord loved them." So that their royalty is all of free grace, and hence adopted into the Lord's household. Every age of the church, however, hath shewn the most decided testimonies, that the seed royal was never extinct, but in the worst of times there hath been an election "according to the remnant of grace." Elijah in his day, thought himself alone, when the Lord had seven thousand in Israel, 1 Kings xix. 18. And in Paul's days, there were many thousands that believed, Acts xxi. 23. And John beheld the

church in a vision made up of multitudes that no man could number, Rev. vii. 9.

But what above all things to be observed in tracing this royal family is, that they all have union with Christ. They are called by his name under various titles, such as his children, his seed, his offspring, his jewels, his sheep, and the like. And by virtue of this, the promises of the covenant are all made to them in Christ, and to Christ for them. "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing on their offspring." And the consequent effects are said to follow, "they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses." And their knowledge of their relationship, shall arise therefrom. "One shall say, I am the Lord's: and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel," Isa. xliv. 3—5. And all the properties of relationship found in them, mark the features of this union. They are not only separate and set apart from the world, in God's choice from all eternity, but by the Lord's effectual calls of them in time. They are spiritually fed with meat which the world knoweth not. They have sweet manifestations of grace to which the world are strangers. They have continual access at court, they know the Lord, and the Lord makes himself known to them. In a word, they have the privilege to cry, Abba, Father! and the Spirit witnesseth to their spirits, that "they are children of God."

And the Lord Jesus, while making himself known to them by his Spirit, gives them to enter into a clear apprehension that he hath redeemed them by his blood. Jesus proves his oneness and relationship in having acted as their husband and surety, and bought them out of the hands of infinite justice, by the sacrifice of himself. Here, indeed, their royalty as blood-bought children, and the wife of Christ, is eminently set forth.

The character of redemption is expressed in these words: "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death are all their life-time subject to bondage," Heb. ii. 14. Hence the song of heaven: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, and hast made us kings and priests unto God and the Father," Rev. v. 9, 10. So that from one eternity to another, and from everlasting to everlasting, this royal family traces their origin and high relationship with Christ in God, and are uniformly shewn in all the bible, to be "the sons of God, and heirs of a kingdom which cannot be moved," Heb. xii. 28.

Having now then gone forth in the opening of this little tract, as into the eternity that is past, and sailed along the coast of this present time state of the church in quest of the characters of the royal family, looking forward to the eternity that is to come, in proof of the same, we now land again on the confines of time, to consider some few of the many sweet and precious truths which are intimately connected with the subject, and arise out of the same. May the Lord bless the whole to our view.

And first; we learn the provision made from all eternity, for the welfare of this royal house. Chosen in Christ, united to Christ, made holy in Christ, ordained to the adoption of children in Christ, and from one eternity to another, accepted in Christ; every thing relating to the present and everlasting blessedness of the church, was all formed, appointed, and secured in one and the same moment, in the counsel, purpose, will, and pleasure of God. When the church came up at the first to Christ's view, and was presented to him by the Father, she appeared to him one with himself, holy

in his holiness, and adorned with the comeliness which he hath put upon her, and as she will appear in when he shall bring her home to dwell with him, and to be his companion in glory for ever. Such the church was when the Son of God betrothed her to himself; and such she will be when brought home to the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven. The intermediate state of the present life of sin and defilement could occasion no divorce. Royal the church was from all eternity; and royal she must continue to all eternity. Sin could not do away either the birth-right of her heavenly descent, or her marriage union. It hath, indeed, laid a foundation for the more illustrious display of her husband's love. The Son of God hath made her his by purchase as well as gift. And thus that sweet scripture is explained, that while "we have redemption in his blood," it is no less "to the praise of the glory of his grace, who hath made us accepted in the beloved," Eph. i. 6, 7.

Secondly. We behold this royal house uniformly existing in all ages of the world, "a remnant in the midst of many people," unmixed with any, and opposed by all. They have been, and still are, as Jacob's seed were prophesied to be, "as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men," Micah v. 7. Even in the worst of times they have been found, and it is a sweet promise, so they shall be. And their glorious head and husband is engaged to preserve them from the general defection of the times, when "all that dwell upon the earth shall worship the beast whose names are not written in the book of life, of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8.

Thirdly. We find this royal house, in all the branches of it, (excepting a very few instances, 1 Cor. i. 26, &c.) during the present state, in indigent circumstances.

They are strangers and pilgrims upon earth. "The world knoweth them not, because it knew him not." Poor in this world, though rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. Hence, amidst the true and genuine marks of royalty in "the Spirit witnessing with their spirits that they are the children of God;" and living in sweet fellowship and communion with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ; they are very poor and mean in every accommodation. Little do they partake of the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, or the precious things put forth by the moon; but theirs is a life of faith, "from the good-will of him that dwelt in the bush." Reader! is this your case? Hath the God of all grace called you with an holy calling to the knowledge of your union and fellowship with Christ? Then hath he also called you to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus! And this is the crown and top of all blessings God hath to bestow, and all in Christ. All outward accommodations, or the want of them, are nothing. If all the other blessings of the earth, bestowed upon mankind from the creation of the world to the end of time had been showered upon one man, and that man's life, instead of being limited to threescore years and ten, had been made ten thousand; one love-token of Jesus, as the royal seed of Christ, is infinitely more than all. Oh, the unspeakable blessedness of that voice; "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine," Isa. xliii. 1. Oh, the vast privilege of "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life," Jude 21.

One word more; while this royal family remain in disguise, under the present circumstances of their humbled state, they should never lose sight of this one most blessed truth, that every situation in which they are placed, and every condition in which they can be exercised, are all ministering to the one great end, of bring-

ing them ultimately forth to the manifestation of their royalty. As they themselves were chosen before the world, and chosen in Christ to the adoption of children, God doth by them as wise men do by their children, make all their education, trainment, and discipline, to minister to the one great end intended in preparing them for their future glory in the court where they are to be kings and priests to God and the Father. They were chosen and beloved before time in their persons. Whatever their education is now, this only becomes subservient to manifest that love. So that whatever fails, this cannot fail. Let the earth, and all that is in it, go into confusion, God's purposes of his royal family can feel no shock. They have a "kingdom that cannot be moved;" mountains being hurled from their base, do not affect the Rock of Ages.

Reader, what saith the knowledge of your heart to these things? Such is the royal family that we have been speaking of; and such is the kingdom to which they belong. Hath God the Holy Ghost called you with an holy calling from darkness to light, and from the fall of nature translated you into the kingdom of God's dear Son? Hath the Lord the Spirit made you acquainted with the plague of your own heart, and given you to see that you have redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace? Are these blessed impressions of grace upon your heart, so that you trace your mercies to the fountain-head of mercy, in God the Father having chosen you in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blame before him in love? If so, then are you of this royal family, an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ. Let nothing of the present time-state of the church affect you. All is arranged with infinite wisdom, to subserve to the promotion of God's glory, and his people's happi-

ness. Depend upon it, that a synod of angels could not arrange as well as is now arranged all things concerning you. God's glory is more interested in your everlasting welfare than you can be for yourself. Jesus must bring home his royal consort, his royal house. His redeemed must all "pass again," one by one, "under the hand of him that telleth them," Jer. xxxiii. 13. Oh, what joy will burst forth in heaven, when the whole royal family, with their King at their head, shall return with songs of everlasting joy, and endless praises. Lord, let thy kingdom come; and let thy church be brought home to see the King in his beauty, and dwell with him for ever. Amen.

## XIII.

THE UNCEASING WARFARE BETWEEN THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT; IN WHICH THE LORD'S PEOPLE ARE EXERCISED THROUGH THE WHOLE LIFE OF GRACE, UNTIL GRACE IS CONSUMMATED IN GLORY.

It was many a year from the time that the Lord was pleased to begin his work of grace upon my heart, before that I was brought into a clear apprehension either of my total depravity, or the Lord's finished salvation. Very slow were my advances in the divine life. Every inch of ground have I trodden over, in a way of pursuit after some supposed attainments of my own, before that I learnt what the Lord taught the church by the prophet—"their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord," Isa. liv. 17. For although from the first awakenings of grace the Lord brought me under convictions of sin, and taught me the needs be of salvation by Christ; yet very superficial were my views at that time of the depths of human corruption, and of the depths of divine mercy. Falling in with the too generally received notion, in what are called gospel churches, that a life of grace in the creature is a life of progressive holiness; like horses in a teem, where each follows his leader, I trotted on the beaten path with the many, not doubting but that I should at length attain (what I took for granted others did attain) inherent holiness, that through Christ I might recommend myself before God. Little did I at this time know "the plague of my own heart!" Little had the Lord then led me, as he hath since done, into "those chambers of imagery" which are in my corrupt nature. Oh, what hath the Lord now led me to discover of original, imbred, indwelling sin! How often doth the voice follow me as did the prophet, upon some new dicovery —"hast thou seen this, O son of man? hast thou seen

this? Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these!" Ezek. viii. throughout.

Reader, what hath the Lord taught you of these things? What views have you of the inherent holiness of the creature, and progressive sanctification, which so many insist upon, but which none of them in their own hearts ever knew? The apostle Paul had been in a state of conversion before God more than twenty years when he wrote his epistle to the Romans; and in that epistle he gave in his experience before the church, and said, "I know that in me--that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," Rom. vii. 18. What will our modern self-righteous pharisees, and the advocates for progressive sanctification, say to this?

There is not a point which the church of God hath greater need to have a clear apprehension of, and to be well-grounded in, than scriptural views of sin. Few enter into the consideration of the subject: and fewer still form their judgment of it by God's standard. But according to my apprehension of divine truths, it is impossible for any one to be conscious of the totally lost and undone estate of the human nature by the fall, or the vastness of that mercy in the recovery by the Lord Jesus Christ, who is not taught of God somewhat of the nature of sin, in order rightly to appreciate divine mercy. Shall I, by way of explaining the nature of the unceasing warfare between flesh and spirit in God's children, shall I beg the reader's attention to an observation or two upon the subject? It will minister, under God's teaching, to good; and I hope, prove profitable in the end both to the writer and reader of this little tract.

I begin with observing that sin, wheresoever it is found, or with whomsoever it works, is, and by its very nature must be, one and the same. Whether it be wrought in earth or hell, whether by men or devils, whether found in the redeemed or the damned, there is

no difference in the thing itself. Sin is the same; and the nature and being of sin is the same. It is an infinite evil. Its being and its nature no creature can define. Even they that feel its awful effects, can neither describe its cause or its properties. The truest mirror in which to behold its hideous features, is the blood of Christ. Here is seen its tremendous consequences; and from whence we gather the strongest apprehension of its awful malignity. But even here we discover not its nature.

Again. The guilt of sin in itself is greater than all the acts of sin; precisely as the cause of any thing is greater, whether good or evil, than any effects produced by it. The ocean being the fountain of all rivers, is of necessity greater than all rivers. And the root of a tree exceeds all the productions of that tree. Hence, in like manner, the original guilt in our nature cannot but be greater, in point of malignity, than all the actual transgressions of that nature; by so much as any one cause transcends its own effect.

Once more. As sin is found in the Lord's people as well as in the ungodly, we are to calculate the evil of sin not as much by actual transgressions as from the malignity of inbred, original sin, which is alike in all, and is the source of all actions. For though the effects of sin do not appear alike in all, yet the cause is the same in all. The root is there, and it is that which constitutes the guilt of sin. Evil passions may be, and frequently are, restrained in some, which break out in others. But this diversity ariseth not from any difference in the common nature, but from that common nature being differently acted upon; in some instances left to the impulse of nature, in others restrained by grace; just as seeds not sown in the earth will remain inert and unproductive, while the same seeds cast into a favourable soil for culture will spring forth and fructify. The tyger is not the less tyger because chained.

Gunpowder if made damp with rain will resist explosion. But in both instances remove the causes of restraint, and the nature of each will soon manifest itself to which they belong. I feel humbled to the dust in the contemplation, and tremble at the picture I myself have drawn. If it be so, (and that it certainly is, by all the authority of God's word) then it will follow that the guilt of sin, in the original stock of sin, is in all men the same. What one man hath committed in actual transgression all might commit; yea, all would commit were all causes alike corresponding to produce such effects, and the grace of God during the temptations withdrawn. Oh! how sweet is that prayer, and how needful for every child of God in grace daily to bring before the mercy-seat of God in Christ: "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe; yea, I shall have respect unto thy statutes continually," Psalm cxix. 117.

Shall I prevail upon the reader to pause over what hath been proposed to him on this very solemn subject? Shall I still further prevail upon him to bring the subject home from the head to the heart; and looking up for the divine teaching of God the Spirit, will he not from hence learn the cause of that unceasing warfare which is everlastingly carrying on between the flesh and the spirit in the Lord's people? Can there be otherwise than a warfare between the old body of sin unrenewed, and the new creature in grace "formed after the image of him that hath created him."

But, (say the advocates of inherent holiness and progressive sanctification,) is there not a change wrought upon the body at regeneration; and though not a perfection of degrees, is there not a perfection of parts in the body, as well as the spirit? Let us hear what the word of God saith on this important point; and by that standard let the decision be formed.

I have already entered, and largely entered into this question, in my Poor Man's Commentary, in various

parts of that humble work; more particularly on Romans vii. and viii. and also 2 Thessalonians ii. But while I refer to what is there offered, I would glance in this place again at some few of the more prominent features on the subject.

It is worthy our closest observation that our Lord Jesus Christ himself, when discoursing with Nicodemus on the subject of regeneration, wholly confined it to a work on the Spirit: "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," John iii. 6. And the doctrine is not more scriptural than reasonable. For as no effect can rise above its cause, so neither can the body rise above its nature, but must necessarily remain, while flesh, a body of flesh until death. Hence, while the spirit at regeneration is born again from the death of sin in the Adam-fall transgression, quickened together with Christ, made a partaker of the divine nature, and being united to Christ, can die no more, but is as holy as it ever can be, and all things are given to it "which pertain to life and godliness," the body remains still unrenewed, still the subject of sin, and still exposed to all the temptations of a sinful nature. And hence those conflicts which take place between flesh and spirit, in the unceasing warfare, continue through the whole life of grace, until grace is finished in glory.

And it should be further observed, in confirmation of this most certain truth, that the death of the body, in the same corruption, lays the foundation for those triumphs of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the glories of our resurrection which is to follow; when that "which is sown in corruption is raised in incorruption," and that which is "sown a natural body will be raised a spiritual body." Upon the supposition that our bodies are in part renewed when the spirit is regenerated, how would it be possible for that holy portion, even to a thousandth part, to see corruption? Surely there

would be a physical impossibility in this case for such an event to take place. I speak with all possible reverence when I say, that over and above the very nature of the thing itself, on redemption grounds, it was not possible that the human nature of Christ, having no sin in it, could be holden by death. God's holy one could not see corruption, Psalm xvi. 19. Acts ii. 24—31. And if any part or portion of the body of Christ's redeemed ones was regenerated, that holiness could no longer be liable to corruption. But it is the express doctrine of scripture, that the bodies of the saints which sleep in Jesus are sown natural bodies, and will be raised spiritual bodies; sown in weakness, they will be raised in power; sown in dishonour, and raised in glory. The Lord Jesus, it is said, will change our vile bodies, that they may be like to his glorious body. But how could they be said to be vile if in part holy? Yea in that blessed account given by Paul, under the Holy Ghost, of the Lord Jesus coming at the last day to raise up his people from their graves, it is said that such as are found alive in the body at his advent will be changed. But wherefore changed, if their bodies were in a state of progressive holiness before?

To these scriptural testimonies in relation to this doctrine, let us look to the scriptural testimonies for the same proof of the doctrine in the lives of God's people. In the history of the best of men, in patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, not one of them ever manifested the possession of inherent holiness, or progressive sanctification. On the contrary, we find that they all were exercised in the same unceasing warfare as the church in all ages hath been, and still is, of grace and corruption. I need not particularize. There is not one of them whose history God the Holy Ghost hath recorded, but gives proofs of this solemn truth. We read of the meekness of Moses, the patience of Job, the sanctification of Jeremiah from the womb, the warmth of zeal in

Paul, and the faithfulness of Peter. But all these and every other carried about with them, as their history manifests, the body of inherent corruption; and as occasion offered, the evil shewed itself. And can any child of God of the present hour, truly and savingly called by grace, think otherwise of himself? "Are we better than they? (said Paul) no, in no wise; for we have before proved all under sin!" Reader! do you fancy yourself an exception? Put your hand to your heart: look and read what passeth there in a single day; yea, a short hour! And depend upon it, if God be your teacher, you will see enough to fall under the same conclusion with Paul; "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness." I hate vain thoughts, said David. So do I! nevertheless, like troops fron Teman, (as Job calls them) they beset me continually; and even rob me at times before the face of God! Can such a body be regenerated? Is this a progressive holiness?

One difficulty may yet seem to arise to the hearty conviction of this doctrine; and as I wish to give every possible objection a full hearing, I will beg to meet it in this place. Upon the presumption, that the redemption by Christ is a full and finished salvation, (which all taught of God the Holy Ghost most certainly know) and by the great work of regeneration the child of God is truly united both in body, soul, and spirit to Christ, which it certainly is; (for by virtue of that union it is that the spirit, at the dissolution of the body, joins the spirits of just men made perfect; and the body is raised at the last day "by the Spirit of Jesus dwelling in him," Rom viii. 11.) can it be supposed, (it may be said) that Christ is thus united to the body, and yet the body remain wholly unrenewed? To which I would humbly beg to answer. No doubt every thing connected with a subject so highly mysterious as the union of Christ and his church is, must be attended with

great difficulty of apprehension to creatures such as we are. Nevertheless, this feature is not more wonderful than many others in the articles of our holy faith. And truth of any kind is not the less truth because not brought within the grasp of our unripe faculties to explain. We are told that "our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us," 1 Cor. vi. 19. And why should it be more incredible for the Holy Ghost to dwell in our bodies than to quicken our souls? Doth it follow from thence that the Holy Ghost, by his indwelling presence, contracts any defilement from the bodies he inhabits? Doth not the sun of this lower world shine upon men and things, and give life to millions, without imbibing any thing from the creatures he brings into being? And shall not the Creator of that sun have power to dwell both in the hearts and bodies of his people without any such consequences? Yea, to go one step further. Is it not a most certain truth, that when the Holy Ghost comes to quicken the sinner, he abides with him for ever? Did not Jesus so promise? John xiv. 16. And can the issue be otherwise than certain? And yet, who shall explain, or if for the want of ability to explain, who will venture to question how the Holy Ghost dwelleth in the bodies of his saints, as his temple, when those bodies are mouldering in the grave! That such is the fact none who believe the words of Jesus concerning his promise of the Holy Ghost, of his abiding with his people for ever, can deny. But to explain how, exceeds the province of man! That one scripture is unanswerable in proof—"If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you!" Rom. viii. 11. Hence, therefore, the whole person of a child of God, body, soul, and spirit, may be, and most certainly is, united to the Lord Jesus, when the spirit is regene-

rated and made a new creature in Christ Jesus; though it is the spirit of this child of God only which is renewed, while the body still remains, and will remain till death, the same subject of sin!

And now let the reader pause over the whole. Let him, under the Lord's teachings, observe whether this view of the subject doth not fully explain the cause of that unceasing warfare, with which the child of God is exercised day by day, and will be exercised while travelling through this howling wilderness. For, until the Lord undresseth his redeemed for death, they are never unbuckled from wearing and using the whole armour of salvation. And were it not that I have already trespassed beyond my usual limits, I could shew many, yea, very many, and very blessed causes, wherefore it is, that our gracious Lord, who is everlastingly looking on and helping his holy warriors, and could, if he pleased, put an end to the battle at once, by taking home the whole army to heaven, still appoints and overrules to his glory and their welfare this war. Let the reader accept a few for the many: and the Lord bless them to his comfort!

And first. The consciousness of this unceasing warfare, arising from a body of sin and death, is highly calculated, (and as the Lord plainly designed) to make the child of God go softly all his days. There can be no cause for confidence while carrying about such a mass of uncleanness, corruption, and sin. Oh! what a volume to this amount is that one scripture: "That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all thou hast done, saith the Lord God!" Ezek. xvi. 63.

Secondly. The consciousness of this unceasing warfare, and arising from such a cause, cannot but tend, under the grace of God, to put a total stop to all pharisaical pride of self-righteousness. How is it possible,

indeed, for any man, who for one short day watches over the workings of his own body of sin, to be proud? And to be fairly and fully stript of this awful covering of a deluded mind must be a blessing indeed! "God resisteth the proud," we are told in scripture. And if we were to analyze sin in the root, certain it is, this is among the greatest of all. Nay, perhaps the very chief; for the pharisee is a rival with God in claims to holiness. And as holiness is only in the Lord, God cannot but hate this sin which aims to rob him of his glory. Hear what the Lord saith, and judge of the evil: "A people (saith the Lord) that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; which say, stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou; these are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day!" Isa. lxv. 3—5.

Thirdly. The consciousness of this unceasing warfare becomes a blessed means in the Lord's hand, for keeping open a constant spring of real sorrow in the soul. The true seed of Jacob, like their father, while having always in remembrance a lively sense of their personal uncleanness, will do, as he did, daily, hourly, at the mercy-seat. "He had power with God; yea, he had power over the angel and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him," Hosea xii. 3, 4. Oh! what earnestness of soul at the mercy-seat will the child of God make use of, when presenting himself under the deepest sense of his nothingness and sin before the pardon-office of God in Christ! Ezra ix. 3, to the end.

Fourthly. The consciousness of this unceasing warfare becomes, in the Lord's hand, the most blessed means of rendering the grave dear to the child of God, that instead of shrinking from it as the ungodly, he longs for the hour, when dropping the body at death, he drops sin and all its sorrows with it for ever. Nothing more sweet and consolitory than death to the

child of God! Like the patriarch he hears the well-known voice, "fear not, Jacob, to go down into this Egypt, I will go with thee!" Jesus saith, "I will surely visit you, and the Lord will bring up my bones from thence," Gen. xlvi. 3.—l. 24, 25.

Lastly, and above all. The consciousness of this unceasing warfare, Oh! how doth it endear the person of Christ, and render him increasingly precious, as he becomes increasingly necessary to bring through and bring home all his redeemed to glory? With what endearness of affection will Jesus daily and hourly appear more and more lovely, as the soul daily and hourly feels the need of Jesus amidst the conflicts of sin and Satan? Oh! precious, precious Lord Jesus! let them that know not the plague of their own heart, cool in their regard to thee, and grow proud in their own attainments. But, Lord! let it be the blessedness of my soul to be everlastingly discovering more and more my own unworthiness, and more and more of thy suitableness and all-sufficiency! And when thou hast stripped me of every thing in the creature, made me as bare and as naked as I was born, when my God hath turned all my furniture into the street, and I am left as an empty house with nothing but vacant walls and a vacant heart to every thing but a longing of soul for Jesus; then let my Lord come in and take an entire possession, and fill my every faculty as he fills heaven and earth with his glory. Oh! for a portion of that grace which may enable me to "comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that I may be filled with all the fulness of God."

Reader, farewell! "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

## XIV.

THE BEST OF REMEDIES FOR THE WORST OF TIMES; OR, THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, AND COMMUNION WITH GOD, IN HIS TRINITY OF PERSONS, AN INFALLIBLE PRESERVATIVE AGAINST ALL THE HERESIES OF MEN.

It is very blessed to observe, what a world of tenderness God the Holy Ghost hath manifested to the church, in watching over her in all ages. His province in the covenant of grace appeared in the very first moment the church was named. And the Lord the Spirit hath continued ever since, with unremitting attention, during the whole time-state of the church, and will continue through all periods, until grace is finished in glory.

His was the office to prepare the church for the coming of Christ. His no less to carry on the great design, when the Son of God had come and finished redemption work, by the sacrifice of himself. And his the same when the Lord Jesus had returned to glory, and left the efficient part for the ministry of the Spirit in the hearts of his people. For no sooner had Jesus *ascended,* than the Holy Ghost *descended;* and in an open display of himself, took upon him the more immediate government of the church, in his own personal ministry. And from the same unchanging love to the church, in watching over her best interests, he ordained his servants the apostles, and inspired them with the spirit of prophecy to forewarn the church of the awful heresies which would arise to mark the latter day dispensation. And let any enlightened eye read what the apostles have delivered to the church in their epistles on this subject, and compare their predictions with the events now going on in the world, and it cannot fail but the mind must be struck with overwhelming conviction at the wonderful agreement. Had God the Holy Ghost

sent these inspired records but yesterday, surely they could not more accurately have described the several heresies now abounding, than he hath done by the spirit of prophecy so many hundreds of years before the things predicted were to be fulfilled.

Doth the reader require proof? Here it is. One or two quotations from those prophetical scriptures, will be abundant in point.

The Holy Ghost by Paul thus declares. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils," 1 Tim. iv. 1.

Observe that it is said, "*Now* the Spirit speaketh expressly." And it may be asked, doth not the Spirit when at any time speaking in his holy word, always speak expressly? Yes, no doubt he doth. For in all that is written in the scriptures of truth, it is the Spirit that speaketh *in* them and *by* them. "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," 2 Pet. i. 21. There seems, therefore, a special reason for this particularity of expression, "*now*," in this scripture. And the reason seems as evident. The Holy Ghost foreknew, that in the latter ages of the church, and in those departures from the faith which would distinguish them, a prominent feature would be the denial of the Person, Godhead, and ministry of the Holy Ghost. Hence, therefore, to refute, and for ever silence such daring blasphemies, the Holy Ghost would have it worded as it is here given by the apostle; "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly." And this at once proves his Person, Godhead, and ministry. His Person; for how can he be otherwise than a person, who by speaking performs the actions of a person, and that expressly by himself? His Godhead; for how can he be otherwise than God, who by foretelling future events, doth such things as belong only to God? Isa. xli. 24. His ministry; for what higher proofs can be given of the

Holy Ghost's ministry, than his thus watching over the church, and warning her so long before of things to come?

Now mark what is further said in this scripture. "Some shall depart from the faith." Observe, it is said, "*some*." Yes, blessed be God not *all*. For in the worst of times, the Lord hath "a seed which shall serve him, and which shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation," Ps. xxii. 30. And the faith which those persons are said to depart from, is not said to be the faith of God's elect; "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," Jude 3. For this faith they never had, and consequently could not depart from; but the faith of a mere profession, which thousands calling themselves christians take up with on hearsay, and as readily put down again. Such a faith as this, is a mere national or a congregational faith, which as it is easily received, so is it as easily parted with. But what hath this to do with the faith which, as the apostle explains it, "is of the operation of God?" Col. ii. 12.

And what follows in this passage of scripture, tends to confirm this yet more. "Giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils!" Here the seductions by men, and doctrines by devils, are blended as one; for indeed they are no other. And what seductions by men can be more in correspondence with the doctrines of devils, than those which would fain persuade us, what the devil had the impudence to attempt on Christ himself, namely, to call in question whether he was the Son of God, Matt. iv. 3—6. It was this declaration of Christ's being "one with the Father," and calling himself "the Son of God," for which the Jews took up stones to stone Christ, John x. 30. to the end. And it was the same blessed declaration of Christ on his trial, that he was the Son of God, for which the high priest rent his clothes, in token that in his judgment he had

spoken blasphemy, and for which he was instantly pronounced "to be guilty of death," Matt. xxvi. 63—66. So that the seductions of men, and the doctrines of devils, as in the former instance, being directed against the Person, Godhead, and ministry of the Holy Ghost; so here it is against the person and Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ. And both strike at the very root of all the mysteries of our most holy faith. And however it may in appearance be *men* that would seduce to it, yet the thing itself is from *hell*, and therefore called, the "doctrines of devils." And indeed here it is that Satan manifests his deadly hatred against the whole persons of the Godhead. For if the Sonship of Christ, in his essential and natural filiation be denied, the paternity of God the Father must be denied also. For if one be not the Son, neither can the other be Father. And then all the blessed soul-refreshing truths, with which the word of God abounds, of the Father as Father, and the Son as Son, are done away, and the church of God deprived of every covenant-promise. And as a link in the same chain of "the doctrines of devils," the denial of the Person, Godhead, and ministry of the Holy Ghost forms a part, thereby destroying or (more properly speaking) attempting to destroy the glorious foundation of our holy faith—of Jehovah existing in a trinity of persons; "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one," 1 John v. 7. If these perversions of the truths of God are not among the chief seductions of men and doctrines of devils, it will be difficult to find any other to mark the heresies of the latter days apostacy.

Once more. Besides this and several like scriptures, which the Holy Ghost sent to the church by his servant Paul, the Lord hath added others to the same amount, by the apostles Peter, Jude, and John. I must not trespass in bringing forward all; one only by Peter will be sufficient. Thus he speaks; "But there were false

prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." 2 Pet. ii. 1.

Here again observe. The heretics, which the Holy Ghost foretold should spring up in the latter days to trouble the church, are not said to be the openly profane, but professors; such as would mingle and be found among the people. And they are not mere hearers, but teachers. And the doctrines which they are said to bring in, are not at once plainly and honestly delivered by them, as men taught of God would do, but "privily;" that is, cautiously, and little by little. The apostle Jude, in his description of them, saith, "certain men *crept* in unawares." Crept in serpent-like, worming themselves first into the good opinion of the people, and for a while appearing as the ministers of Christ, and like the Korahs, and Dathans, and Abirams of old, "famous in the congregation, men of renown!" Num. xvi. 1, 2. And then, when having gained the affections of their hearers, giving out to the full their awful blasphemies

And Peter's account of them, though adding a few shades here and there to Paul's sketches, yet when compared and brought together, prove that it is but one and the same picture, forming a complete family likeness; the prominent feature of which is, "denying the Lord that bought them." That is, not denying that there had been such a man upon earth as Jesus Christ of Nazareth; but denying his Godhead, denying his true and proper Sonship, as a distinct person from the person of the Father, and the person of the Holy Ghost; and therefore not being one in nature and essence with Jehovah; denying that there is more than one person in the Godhead, making the Son of God only a title, and the Holy Ghost a mere emanation. So that by

refusing belief to the distinct personality of God the Son, such men make him, in their creed, a Son only by adoption; and by denying his Godhead, which he possesseth in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost, they virtually deny with it redemption by his blood, and justification by his righteousness; for the merit and efficacy of both can have no adequate foundation but in his person and Godhead. And the denying all these glorious distinctions of character belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ, as "one with the Father, over all, God blessed for ever," they are said to "bring upon themselves swift destruction!" And what but destruction (and that swiftly indeed when it comes) must follow such awful heresies, (which have no foundation, but in the proud unhumbled conjectures of human reason) both upon those that preach them, and those that receive them!

Here let the child of God, who is taught of God, and regenerated by the Holy Ghost, (and be it remembered that it is to such only this little tract is recommended) here let him pause and ponder well these striking features of character, drawn by the Lord the Holy Ghost himself, of what should mark the latter day apostacy. Then let him compare them with what is every day going on in the midst of the professing world. Then let him judge for himself, under divine teaching, whether there can remain the shadow of a doubt, to what age of the church more than the present, the blessed Spirit referred, when by Paul he said, that "in the last days perilous times should come!" 2 Tim. iii. 1, &c.

But while such views of the subject cannot fail, through the Lord's grace, of carrying conviction to the mind of every truly regenerated child of God; let not the faithful either be discouraged or fear. That blessed promise of God can never fail; no not in a single instance—"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth

sure, having this seal; the Lord knoweth them that are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. Yes, blessed be our God. The church upon earth is as safe and secure as the church in heaven. And for my part, so far am I from being alarmed at the awfulness of the times, from the declension and lukewarmness among mere professors of godliness, and the heresies of others, that I find cause to bless God for them. Such things must be, to confirm the truth of God's word. Yea, and such men who are the authors of them must be, to be witnesses for God's truth in the earth, however they mean not so, neither do their hearts intend it. Nay, the scriptures could not be fulfilled without them. "There must be heresies also among you, (saith Paul) that they which are approved, may be made manifest among you," 1 Cor. xi. 19. But for the everlasting safety of the church, John was taught to tell the Lord's people; "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things," 1 John ii. 20.

It is under these views I have ventured to greet the church of God, in the opening of a new year, with a brotherly salutation, and to say, "Peace be with you!" And in the prospect of the present awful day, of the wilderness through which the church is passing, to propose to the Lord's people, as the title-page of this little work expresseth, 'The best of remedies for the worst of times.' And sure I am, that every child of God, who by sovereign grace is brought into a personal knowledge of God, and communion with God, in his trinity of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, hath given him by the Lord a never-failing preservative against all the heresies of men which have been, which now are, or which hereafter may be on the earth. May God the Spirit confirm his word by his power, and bless the means to the end, to the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!

And here I begin the subject of the best of remedies for the worst of times, with assuming for a principle, that the reader for whom this tract is intended hath been savingly called by sovereign grace; and as such, is no stranger to the plague of his own heart; neither to the person, character, offices, and relations of the Lord Jesus Christ. I begin from hence—for without some apprehension both of ourselves and of the Lord, there can be no communion with the Lord. It is a blessed truth of scripture, "They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee." But where there is no knowledge of the Lord in the heart, there can be no foundation for "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John i. 3.

Now first in relation to God the Father, in our personal knowledge of the Father, and personal communion with him. He hath made a blessed provision for opening, and keeping open, an unceasing communion between himself and the persons of his people, in those acts of grace which are personally his own, and under which the scriptures reveal him. He it is which hath *chosen* the church, *adopted* the church, and *accepted* the church in Christ his dear Son, before all worlds. And these, be it observed, according to scripture are all *personal* acts of his own, in which the persons of God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, personally considered, are never spoken of in the scripture, as taking part. As if Jehovah, in his trinity of persons, while revealing his whole counsel, will, and pleasure, as the one sovereign act in the joint agency of all the persons in the Godhead, would at the same time make himself known by several distinct and special acts, which might endear each glorious person to the church, under some distinct and special character. And hence God the Son bears testimony to these personal acts of the Father, when ascribing his possession of his church to the personal

gift of the Father, " Thine they were, and thou gavest them me," John xvii. 6. And God the Holy Ghost no less by Paul declared, that of " God the Father, the whole family in heaven and earth is named," Eph. iii. 14, 15.

Secondly. In like manner, the Person of God the Son openeth to his church and people a source of unceasing communion with himself, in all the circumstances of their pilgrimage upon earth, until he brings them home, and manifests himself in open vision of glory. He it is, and not the Person of the Father, or the Person of the Holy Ghost, that hath taken into union with himself our nature. And he only it is, which hath redeemed the church with his blood. Hence, both by union and by redemption, he hath personally opened a way of communion with them; and endeared himself to them by every tie of tenderness which can call up the affections of the awakened soul in endless delight.

Thirdly. And no less so with God the Holy Ghost. His sovereign act of regeneration, and all the other acts of grace in maintaining and keeping alive his special communications in the soul, these are the source of blessedness. And these are the effects of his own special, distinct, and personal agency: as much as those before considered of the Father and the Son. And all prove together, that the life of God in the souls of his people, ariseth from the joint love and operation of the holy, undivided Three in One. And hence the church is blessed in " the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost," 2 Cor. xiii. 14. And as these are special, personal, and distinct acts, which plainly and clearly define and prove the Persons in the Godhead; and manifest the love of each, and of all, to every individual of Christ's mystical body; so do they open a blessed source of unceasing communion between Je-

hovah in his trinity of persons, and the whole church of God in all her members, whom "the Lord hath made willing in the day of his power."

But we must not stop here! Nay, we have yet considered but the smallest part of the subject. The goings forth of our spirits, in acts of personal communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; very blessed as these things are in themselves, and ministering as they do, to keep up in the soul "a joy unspeakable and full of glory;" yet are they not to be compared with those gracious manifestations made to the church by each glorious Person in the Godhead. A look, a word, one love-token, from the Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, to a child of God, is more blessed than ten thousand of our goings forth in prayer or praise to him. For the manifestations of God's love to us is the sole cause of all our acts of faith and love towards him. For as the word of God saith, "we love him because he first loved us," 1 John iv. 19. so it must be equally said, we bless him because he hath first blessed us. His is the sole cause, ours but the effect.

And it is of all enjoyments the highest and the best which the church of God can receive upon earth, (yea, the blessedness in heaven can only be exceeded by larger and more open displays of the same,) when Jehovah, in his trinity of persons, is making himself known unto his people "otherwise than he doeth to the world." It is a blessed promise, to this amount, of our Lord's, when he saith: "I will send you the Holy Ghost, that he may abide with you for ever. If a man love me, my Father will love him; and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," John xiv. 16—23. Here is an absolute promise and assurance of the abidings of the Holy Three in One with the Lord's people; and the daily enjoyment of the Lord's people in the same most blessedly confirms it.

Let the reader trace it, in relation to each glorious

person, as it is revealed in scripture, and then look for the testimony of it in his own heart. God the Father is said to have chosen the church in Christ, adopted the church as children to himself in Christ, and accepted the church in Christ before the foundation of the world, and for this express purpose, of communion with himself in his dear Son. To this amount, among many others, are these scriptures. "This people have I formed for myself," (mark the expression, for myself,) "they shall shew forth my praise," Isa. xliii. 21. "Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself," (mark again, for himself,) Psalm iv. 3. "The Lord hath chosen Jacob for himself," (still harping upon the same blessed string, for himself,) "and Israel for his peculiar treasure," Psalm cxxxv. 4. And elsewhere, speaking of the preservation of his people in times of general apostacy, the Lord saith, "Yet have I reserved to myself," (observe, still it is all for himself,) "seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal," Rom. xi. 4. And what is the natural and unavoidable conclusion from these scriptures, but that the love of God the Father to his church in Christ, is a special, distinct, and personal love; and his manifestations unto them in consequence thereof, are special, distinct, and personal also. His choice of them is his, not only as they are his by creation, (for in this sense, such are all the works of his hands,) but for union, and to bring them into personal communion with himself; his own, his chosen, his peculiar people, Isa. xliii. 20.

Let the reader look at the subject also, as it relates to the Person of God the Son. It is the church of God which he calls his own, in distinction to every thing beside. All things are his own, because "all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made, that was made," John i. 3. But the church is his own, as his Father's gift, and Jesus loves it as such

with peculiar love, and calls her his spouse, his fair one, his sheep, his people. And when at any time he is spoken of in respect to the several acts of grace which he hath manifested towards them, all that is said of him is also spoken as distinct, special, and personal. He gave himself for us when he had by himself purged our sins. He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And the great object of giving himself for his church is said to be, that he might present it to himself a glorious church. The whole is of himself, and to himself, for the express purpose of communion. Hence, he proposeth to come to them, and sup with them, and they with him; and ultimately to receive them to himself, that "where he is there they may be also." And as the church is said to be "the Father's own elect;" so Christ's redemption of the church is by his own blood. See Titus ii. 14; Heb. i. 3, and ix. 26; Ephes. v. 27; Rev. iii. 20; John xiv. 3; Luke xviii. 7; Heb. ix. 12.

And no less the same special, distinct, and personal acts of God the Holy Ghost, are ascribed to him from the same cause. He is said to regenerate them "because they are sons," Gal. iv. 6. To dwell in them "because they are his temple," 1 Cor. vi. 19, with 2 Cor. vi. 16. So that such a possession of them by the Holy Ghost as his temple, not only demonstrates his Person and Godhead, but also proves that his indwelling in them is for the purpose of communion. And hence the Lord Jesus himself bears testimony, both to his Person, Godhead, and ministry in these acts, which he ascribes to him. He calls him another Comforter, as distinct in person from the Father and himself. He speaks of his indwelling in his people, abiding in them, walking in them, teaching them all things, bringing all things to their remembrance, and glorifying him, by taking of his things and shewing them to his people. See John xiv. throughout. And all these acts demonstrate that the

Person of the Holy Ghost, as is the Person of the Father and of the Son, is unceasingly engaged in opening and keeping open holy communion between Jehovah in his trinity of Persons, and the church, by his gracious work in the soul, and by "directing the heart into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ," 2 Thess. iii. 5.

Now then let the reader pause over the whole subject. Let it be supposed, (indeed it ceaseth to be a supposable case, for it is a blessed reality in the life of the Lord's people—but for the sake of statement let it be supposed,) that the child of God, regenerated by the Holy Ghost, and renewed day by day, is living in sweet "fellowship and communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ;" and that, as the Lord Jesus promised, so he graciously performs—he doth come, and the Father doth come, and make their abode with his people—I would ask, what heresies from without, or doubts from within, shall for a moment tempt the soul of such an one to call in question his personal knowledge of, and communion with, this divine society? Can any man be receiving, from time to time, the blessed manifestations of grace, from Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and yet be unconscious of either? It is possible that the gracious presence of the Lord shall be testified by such love-tokens of his favour, as communion with his people; and yet leave the highly favoured objects of such peculiar favour unrefreshed, and ignorant of the divine manifestations? We do not thus act in common life. If a friend at a distance from us sends a letter or message of his remembrance, though we see him not, yet what he saith through either of those mediums, we regard the same as if present. Or if in personal conversation we have communion with him, though a wall or partition be between, can the whole world persuade us out of the belief of the one, or that we have not known the other?

Reader, what saith your experience to these things? You profess to believe in that blessed doctrine of "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost!" But the question is, what use do you make of this faith? If this faith be not brought into exercise, and never acted upon, it is but a dead faith, (as James calls it,) and alone, and therefore unprofitable. It is like hidden treasure, of no use to the owner, nor to the world. Whereas the faith which worketh by love, is like the riches of the bountiful, brought forth into improvement, and of benefit every day. This faith testified by acts arising out of it, is what the apostle saith, "justifieth before God," James ii. 14, to the end. Hence the child of God who truly believes in "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ," lives in the enjoyment of that grace. He that believes in "the love of God," hath blessed tokens of that love shed abroad in his heart. And he, and he only, who knows personally what "the fellowship of the Holy Ghost is," lives in daily communion with the Holy Ghost.

For my own part, I am free to confess, (and I care not who knows it, though it expose me to the contempt both of professor and profane,) that these things are as familiar to me by faith, as the objects of sight to sense with which I am daily occupied. I know that the mere professor, in the present awful day of pharisaical righteousness, will reproach what his natural religion knows nothing of: and the profane, in this Christ-despising generation, will alike ridicule such things from his ignorance of them: but these have no effect with me; neither ought they to have the smallest influence with the truly regenerated child of God. I find what God the Holy Ghost said by Paul to be true; namely, that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," Heb. xi. 2. And whoever through grace is enabled to use faith in this man-

ner, will find the same. Neither can the infidels of the day produce the shadow of a reason, wherefore the elders obtained a good report by faith under the old testament, and the elders under the new should be less blessed with the same. If Abraham's faith, though it was only seeing "the day of Christ afar off;" yet by substantiating what he believed, and bringing into present enjoyment by this blessed principle what was not in open vision to be realized for many hundreds of years, and affording thereby an immediate relish to the soul; what ought the faith of Abraham's seed to bring forth, who now live, when the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ hath been finished upon earth, and the Lord is returned to heaven to send down all the blessed fruits and effects of it upon his redeemed below? John viii. 56; Gal. iii. 29.

I add a prayer that God the Holy Ghost, the Almighty Agent in the church to render the whole of covenant blessings effectual, may manifest his glorious Person, Godhead, and ministry to all his regenerated ones, in blessed testimonies of all these sovereign acts in their souls. Then will they enter into an heart-felt enjoyment of "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." And then will they find the title of this little tract to be true; 'the best of remedies for the worst of times, against all the heresies of men,' is the personal knowledge of God, and communion with God, in his trinity of Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The church of God, while below, is as truly in union and communion with Christ, as the church of God above. The members of Christ's mystical body can never be brought into nearer relationship with Christ, in another world, than they are now by regeneration in this. At death we do indeed change worlds, but neither our connections nor interest with Christ. The disembodied spirit will have larger, fuller, more open and

glorious manifestations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, when that day comes than now. But the church will have no other God and Father than we now have; no other God the Son than we now know; no other God the Holy Ghost, than the same who first quickened our spirits by his grace, and is now leading us on to glory.

True it is indeed, that all the personal knowledge we here have of God, and communion with God in his trinity of Persons, in comparison of the glory that shall be revealed, is but as "seeing through a glass darkly." But in that ravishing hour, when the redeemed soul goeth forth from the body at the call of Jesus—then "shall we see him face to face, and know even as we are known." And then he who now "standeth behind our wall, (even our flesh,) looking forth at the window (of his word,) and shewing himself through the lattice (of his ordinances,) will throw open the sash between; and with open face we shall behold the glory of the Lord, and be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," Song ii. 9; 2 Cor. iii. 18. Oh! the rapture of soul with which we shall be swallowed up and overwhelmed in the ocean of divine love, when he through whom, and for whom, and by whom, we have had such sweet moments of communion with the one glorious Jehovah in his trinity of Persons here by faith, will then become the one unceasing object of communion, and of unspeakable glory, holiness, and joy to all eternity. Then shall we indeed hail Christ in words like those of the prophet, and say as he did: "Lo, this is our God! we have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord, we have waited for him; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Amen. Isa. xxv. 9.

## XV.

### ON THE SUBJECT OF SANCTIFICATION.

So many and various have been, and still are, the sentiments of men, yea, and of gracious men too, on the subject of sanctification, that it is plain their different views cannot all have been learnt in the same school, and under the same divine teacher. And yet nothing ought to satisfy a child of God, upon a point of such infinite importance, short of his teaching, "which teacheth to profit, and leadeth by the way we should go," Isa. xlviii. 17. and liv. 13.

For my part, so angry have been some of my mother's children (as the spouse in the Canticles call them, Song i. 6.) with me for what I have advanced on the subject in my Poor Man's Commentary, that I fear, without an act of grace from the Lord prompts them to regard me with more tenderness, I shall not soon be forgiven by them.

What a relief it is to my soul on all such occasions, (and I feel the blessedness of it in the moment of writing) that the Lord seeth not as man seeth. If Jesus smiles, it matters not who frowns. And what an holy calm follows the strife of tongues, when ceasing from man, we are enabled to draw nigh unto the Lord! The church had found the sweetness of this frame, when she said, "until till day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountains of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense," Song iv. 6. And until the everlasting day, which hath no night, break in upon my soul, to dispel all the shades of our imperfect knowledge, in the present twilight of existence, I will get me to the Lord Jesus himself; the myrrh and frankincense of whose one offering in the

holy mountain, hath "perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. x. 14.

Say, dear Lord! (for to thee alone do I bring the inquiry) is not sanctification the sole gift of God, in the love-tokens of his grace, and wholly unconnected with, and independent of man's merit? Is not the first manifestation of it, and all the after vouchsafements of it, from the Lord? Yea, doth not the sovereign act itself, in every instance of it to thy people, result from the joint love and favour of the whole Three Persons in the Godhead? Are not thy people "chosen and sanctified by God the Father," Jude 1. Are they not also "sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all?" Heb. x. 10. And no less "chosen to salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit?" 2 Thess. ii. 13. And hence, as those acts of grace are the equal acts of Father, Son, and Spirit towards every individual of Christ's mystical body, while the equality of the act itself (which none but God can perform) manifests the equal person of each in the nature and essence of the Godhead; doth not the act itself at the same time no less manifest its fulness and completeness also? Yea, are not thy people called upon in every exercise of faith and love, to go forth in equal acts of adoration and praise, to the Holy Three in One, as the united source of such blessedness?

Surely it is from hence that, under the gracious teachings of the Lord, I find somewhat for my soul to lean upon, when at any time I am led to contemplate the personal love of the Father, Son, or Spirit. Hence I can, and do, look up to God the Father, with thanksgiving and praise, for that personal act of his grace shewn to me and to all the elect church, in having chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world. Hence, also, I look up with equal acknowledgments to God the Son, for his personal love in having both married the church from everlasting, and having

redeemed her in time from all the dreadful consequences of the Adam-fall transgression. And no less do I bless God the Holy Ghost, for his personal love in the unction of both head and members of Christ's mystical body before the world; and in quickening and regenerating the church in the present time-state of her warfare, when "dead in trespasses and sins." And as all these are so many distinct acts, which plainly define the person of each by whom they are wrought, while all originating from the counsel, will, and pleasure of Jehovah in his trinity of persons; so do they as fully prove, from the infinite perfections of him by whom accomplished, that they are complete acts which can receive no addition or improvement from man. But, if I am to believe that the work of God the Holy Ghost, in quickening and regenerating the church, is not a finished work, as are the acts of the other persons of the Godhead; that sanctification is progressive, and depending on man's improvement; the beautiful order in the covenant of grace is hereby broken, and the great event of salvation left to a peradventure, whether it shall or shall not be accomplished.

Moreover, those scriptures can have no certain acceptation where such sovereign works of grace are alike spoken of, as the free gift of God to the persons of believers; if, while one is to be considered as complete, another is left unfinished. The Holy Ghost, by Paul, thus blessedly comforts the church. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 11. Surely, the church of God is authorized by this precious scripture to consider the being washed, sanctified, and justified, as alike done, and equally the privilege of the Lord's people; and that they are as much interested in the one as in the other. But, if while the being washed and justified are to be accepted by the church as perfect acts to

which nothing can be added by man, sanctification, though declared under the same expressions, is to be accepted differently, and the completeness of it depends upon a progressive improvement in the creature, the sense of this scripture is enervated, and the blessedness of its consolation by so much done away.

So again, the Holy Ghost, by the same apostle, tells the church, that Christ is made of God to his people, "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." And he adds the cause, namely, "that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord," 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. But if Christ be not made of God to his people, as fully and completely sanctification as wisdom, righteousness, and redemption, what a sad chasm in the midst of so blessed a scripture would be here. And still more, in this case the church would not have to glory in the Lord for those mercies as one complete whole; for a man's own progressive sanctification is to form a part in the work, and thus the creature is to divide the glory with the infinite Creator. And is this, indeed, the sense of this glorious scripture?

Once more. The Holy Ghost, by Peter, speaking to the church, when by regeneration she hath attained like precious faith with the apostles, informs the people, that there was given unto them, "all things which pertain to life and godliness, being made partaker of the divine nature," 2 Peter i. 1—4. But on the supposition that among the "all things" which pertain to life and godliness, given to the church, sanctification is not included, but this must be the result of a man's own merit in a progressive improvement; what participation is this of the divine nature where so essential a part is wanting?

I would fain spread these things before my Lord; I dare not accept any other decision but his. On a subject so incalculably important, it is necessary to "cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein

is he to be accounted of?" If I know any thing of my own heart, I have no one object in view, when trying the question by the divine standard, but the divine glory. If the event were to prove the reverse of what I have learnt to accept it, and I have to learn that the grace of God depends for improvement in a progressive sanctification on man; I bless God I will stand upon even ground with the advocates of this doctrine. And then I may, like Peter, when in the dispute among the brethren on the subject of circumcision, he expressed his well-grounded hope of equal acceptance before God with those from whom he differed; so would I say with him, "we believe, (said he) through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they," Acts xv. 1—11.

And do thou, dearest Lord, say—Is not the new birth at regeneration wholly spiritual? Yea, did not Jesus himself teach as much, when in that gracious scripture of his, the Lord said, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," John iii. 6. Are not thy people to apprehend by this plain and familiar illustration, that when, by the quickening influence of God the Holy Ghost at the new birth, the Spirit is brought forth into a new and spiritual life; the body remains unrenewed, and, as much as before, the object and subject of sin and death? And doth not God the Holy Ghost most plainly testify the same, when telling the church—"If Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness," Rom. viii. 10. Can a body, dead because of sin, perform one act of spiritual life; much less while unrenewed, be going on in a state of progressive sanctification? A child of God may, and through grace will, sometimes restrain the swellings of sin from breaking out into deeds of actual transgression; for so the Holy Ghost saith,—"if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the

body, ye shall live," Rom. viii. 13. But if the body, as it is said, "be dead because of sin," how is it possible to do a single act of righteousness? And who that is conscious of this, will talk of progressive sanctification?

Moreover, it should seem, from what is said in holy scripture, that the very exercises, which a truly regenerated child of God is called to, arise wholly from the opposition, which a body of unrenewed nature in flesh and blood, is continually making to a life of grace. The Holy Ghost himself hath said, by Paul, that "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would," Col. v. 17. Thou knowest, Lord! and through thy grace teaching me, I have been led in some degree to know also, since a life of grace began in my soul, that I have had ever since continual conflicts in myself, from these opposite principles. Yea, it seems to me at times, as if there were in me growing imperfections. Say, dearest Lord! could this be the case, if my body of sin were in part renewed? Could that part renewed any longer harass and distress my soul? Nay, if it were but in the smallest degree renewed, and that renewed part progressively sanctified; would it any longer be liable to corruption? And hath either of these exemptions taken place in the history of the church even in a single instance? Can one, even one be produced, in any age from the beginning of the world to the present hour?

Let men say what they may, I know too well the plague of my own heart, to take confidence in any supposed holiness in a body virtually all sin. The language of the man of Uz is mine, and answers in every point to what he confessed. And though God himself bore witness to Job, that he was in a justified state before

God, yet the self-abhorrence of his own mind no less manifested what he knew passed within; compare Job i. 8. with xlii. 5, 6. "If I justify myself, (said he) mine own mouth shall condemn me. If I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul, I would despise my life," Job ix. 20, 21. Had this servant of God any idea of progressive sanctification?

Nay, my Lord! independent of what passeth in the day in those chambers of imagery within me, were I to be judged for what takes place in the watches of the night, in my sleeping hours; even in those things which some may deem involuntary, and perhaps venial; yet even here I find it good to confess guilt before God. I know not what the advocates of inherent holiness and progressive sanctification may think of this statement. It is possible they may assert, that no responsibility is attached to any supposed or real criminality in sleep. And, indeed, I am not anxious to go into the inquiry, whether it be so or not. It is simply of the facts themselves for which I contend. Sure I am, that in a multitude of instances, while my body (in that part of it which is made up of bones, and flesh, and blood) takes rest in sleep, there is another part of me, a thinking faculty, which doth not sleep, and which is not unfrequently most busily engaged, in thoughts, and words, and actions. And, indeed, at times so engaged in evil, as I should blush to communicate to the nearest and dearest earthly friend I have. It becomes an important question, with such as insist upon inherent holiness, to answer, from whence do such things arise? I stay not to determine the point as to my responsibility for them. Let that part of the subject be set aside. But it should seem to be a self-evident truth, that if evil was not within, such circumstances of evil could not be produced. They are the

words of my Lord which saith,—"Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies!"

Precious Lord Jesus! how can I, with such views of indwelling corruption, take confidence from any supposed inherent holiness? Should I not tremble at the very thought of thine inspection, if my acceptance before thee depended upon the least atom of worth in me? If thy word, which holy scripture declares to be "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow;" if this be a "discerner of thoughts and intents of the heart," how "naked and open must be every thing" to thy knowledge, "with whom we have to do?" Heb. iv. 12, 13. And should my Lord, as an Almighty spiritual anatomist, cut down to the back bone of my frame, and throw open at one view the whole inward structure: shouldest thou, great God! make bear the privy-chamber of my heart, the depth of which, and the workings of which, I myself cannot explore; but where all my "secret sins are in the light of thy countenance"—Lord! how should I stand before thee, in the discoveries thou wouldst make, "whose eyes are as a flame of fire?" And can I, can any man, in the consciousness of such things, be led to advocate the cause of inherent holiness? The question rings through all the chambers of the conscience, and the walls of the heart reverberate the solemn sound, and echoes to the inquiry,—"How shall any man be just before God? How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" Job xxv. 4.

When I look back to the days of old; when I consider the years of many generations; when I read the groans and self-reproaches of the greatest servants of the Most High God, not in the days of their unrege-

neracy, but many of them years after a saving work of grace had been wrought in their hearts; I ask myself the question, did these men indeed feel what they have said; and, under such impressions, could any one have made them believe the doctrine of inherent holiness and progressive sanctification? Nay, hath God the Holy Ghost, in the history of those faithful followers of the Lord, given a single instance in all the bible of such an one? Hath the Holy Ghost testified to Noah of such an improvement in his heart, in those different views given of him before and after the flood? Gen. vi. 8—21. Was Lot in a state of progressive sanctification, whose "righteous soul was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked" when in Sodom, but who afterwards fell into such an offence at Zoar? Gen. xix. with 2 Peter ii. 7, 8. Was Abraham advancing in self-holiness, whose faith was so illustrious at Moriah, and towards the close of life took unto him concubines? Gen. xxii. with xxv. 6. Do the lives of Moses, Aaron, David, Jeremiah, Peter, and Paul, furnish proofs of a progression in sanctity, and not rather, on the contrary, most decided testimonies to the reverse? See Numb. xx. 10. Exod xxxii. 21. 2 Sam. vii. compared with chapter xi. Jer. i. with xx. 14, &c. Matt. xvi. 17. with xxvi. 69, &c. Rom. vii. 18, &c. &c.

Gracious Lord Jesus! I desire to lay low in the dust before thy Divine Majesty, under a conscious sense that I find nothing progressive of holiness in my body, which is virtually all sin; for in me, that is, "in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing!" Yes, blessed Lord! let me go softly all my days under a deep sense of it, learning more and more my own nothingness, that I may therefrom, under God the Holy Ghost, know how to value more and more, thy fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency. And if the daily workings

of my heart do but endear my Lord the more to me, I am content to be indeed nothing, yea, worse than nothing, so that Jesus be glorified.

A little while, and I shall drop this body of sin, and with it all its corruptions. Every day hastens on the last day. And when my last day on earth comes, my body will sleep in Jesus, until he shall come to take it to himself, that "where he is, there may I be also." Yes, yes! thou precious Lord Jesus! when thou shalt take home my spirit, to join the assembly of "the spirits of just men made perfect" before thy throne, then will "my flesh rest in hope," until that joyful morning, when "this corruptible shall put on incorruption; and this mortal shall put on immortality." And then, that which is sown in weakness, will be raised in power; and that which is sown a natural body, will be raised a spiritual body. Yes! for my God, my Saviour Jesus himself, shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. And then will my Lord "change my vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. Amen."

## XVI.

### THREE DIALOGUES ON THE THREE GREAT AND LEADING POINTS OF THE GOSPEL, BETWEEN A MINISTER AND HIS PARISHIONER.

#### DIALOGUE I.

*Parishioner.* In consequence of an observation which you lately made in the course of your preaching, I have taken the freedom to call upon you with a request that you would further explain it. You said, (if I mistake not) that the substance of the gospel, considered as to its saving influence on the soul, might be brought within the narrow compass of three particulars. First, to know ourselves in our lost and ruined state before God. Secondly, to know the Lord Jesus Christ, under all his divine offices, as the restorer of our fallen nature. And thirdly, to know that we have a clear interest in him; for under one or other of these great branches, the whole gospel is included; so that, if I have a real conviction that I am a poor, helpless sinner, am convinced that Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour, and am enabled, through divine teaching, to bring home those great truths to my heart, by a personal application to my own case and circumstances, that then I should have learned every thing essential in the life of a christian.

*Minister.* You are perfectly right in your recollection of what I said on those great points, in the course of my preaching; and it gives me great pleasure that you have called upon me for a further explanation. I have only to pray God, that, while I endeavour to inform your understanding, he may mercifully instruct your heart, by the inward illumination of his grace. But that no time be lost in any unnecessary introduction, let us at once enter upon the subject. Suffer me to begin it by asking, what views have you of your being a sinner before God?

*P.* That I am a sinner before God, it is impossible for me to deny; for both scripture and my own experience concur to testify, that in many things I have "sinned, and come short of the glory of God," Rom. iii. 23. And were I so blind to my own imperfections, as to say, "that I have no sin," I should but deceive myself, for "the truth would not be in me," 1 John i. 8. Yet I flatter myself that I am not such a sinner, but that I am an object worthy of the divine mercy.

*M.* I perceive by this answer, that notwithstanding all that seeming candour of confession, you are a stranger to your own heart, and have yet to learn what sin is before God. The man that fancies himself an object worthy of divine mercy, it is plain neither knows God nor himself. Such loose and unfelt confessions as you express, are very common in the world, in which the heart feels but little interested, and as little apprehensive of the wrath to come;" whereas the soul that is brought under the conviction of God's Holy Spirit, is led to see the righteousness of that law which he hath broken, and the holiness of that God whom by sin he hath offended; and under both, sin then appears "exceedingly sinful." Like one exposed, therefore, to the just judgment of an offended God, hearing that awful voice for ever sounding in his ears, which pronounces a curse "upon every soul of man that doeth evil," Rom. ii. 9. beholding the uplifted arm of divine justice ready every moment to fall upon him, he is driven out of all self-confidence, and from every resource of human aid, and cries out in the language of that poor self-condemned sinner, we read of in scripture, "What must I do to be saved?" Acts xvi. 30.

*P.* I am astonished at the representation you make, and cannot but confess, that I never before considered

sin in this solemn light, or apprehended man to be so extremely guilty.

*M.* I was convinced of this from your answer to my first question; but I hope I need not remark to you, that truth is not the less truth for your misconception of it. However lightly unthinking minds may consider human transgression, it is certain it doth not appear so in the sight of God. The Psalmist says, "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, and our secret sins in the light of thy countenance," Ps. xc. 3. Since the fall of Adam, our nature is not only corrupt and sinful, but we are expressly said in scripture, to be "dead in trespasses and sins," Eph. ii. 1. and so, as incompetent to any acts of spiritual life, before the quickening grace of God hath passed upon us, as a dead body is to any animal function. We cannot think a good thought uninfluenced by this grace; for scripture says; "We are not sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves; but all our sufficiency is of God," 2 Cor. iii. 5. We cannot speak a good word; for the same authority declares the impossibility of it; "How can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," Matt. xii. 34. We cannot do a good action without divine aid; for Jesus says, "Without me ye can do nothing," John xv. 5.

*P.* If this be the case, how is it that the generality of the world are so careless and unconcerned respecting these awful truths.

*M.* The circumstances I have mentioned, at the same time that they prove the fact, do as fully account for the cause. Man, by nature, is blind and ignorant; a stranger to himself, and a stranger to God. The world engrosses his thoughts and affections; and hence you will see the various orders of mankind, however engaged in the several objects of their pursuits, yet it

is all with this one view, " to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof," Rom. xiii. 14. Hence they are at ease in Zion, because they are unconscious of danger. No serious inquiry drops from their lips, because no serious concern is awakened in their hearts, and in the various providences by which the Lord calls upon the unthinking world, if at any time through trouble, or affliction, the death of a friend, or sickness in themselves; if either of these events should induce an anxious concern, (as, perhaps, it is almost impossible to avoid) it is but a momentary impression, like traces on the water, effaced almost as soon as made; which the form, void of the power of godliness, like the lullaby of children, easily satisfies, and they fall asleep again very shortly after, as unconcerned as before. Hence you will find thousands, and tens of thousands, every Lord's day attend the service of the church, as one of the prayers expresses it, that ' they have erred and strayed from God's ways like lost sheep, and are miserable sinners;' and cry out frequently during the season of public devotion, for mercy and forgiveness; and then arise from their knees with a complacency that plainly manifests they feel nothing of the misery they expressed, and are not much concerned to obtain the pardon they implored; they speak of sin and the misery connected with it, as men in health do of sickness, or as the man on shore does of a storm or shipwreck, which he knows of only by history.

*P.* You alarm me with this representation, so different from any thing I have ever experienced.

*M.* If I alarm you, it is but with a view to your future peace. As none but the sickly desire the physician's aid, so none but diseased and lost souls can know the value of a Saviour. I have now explained to you, in a brief manner, the first of the great and leading points of the gospel. Go home, my friend, and ponder very seriously the truth I have now proposed to you;

and, above all things, make it the subject of earnest prayer to God, that he may illumine your understanding, and convince your heart.

DIALOGUE II.

*M.* I am glad to see you again; for this renewed visit seems to say, that what I lately proposed to your consideration, hath not been without its effects, but that you are now come for further information on the important subject.

*P.* God grant it may! for at present I am truly miserable. You have awakened such distressing apprehensions in my mind, from what you then said, respecting the sins of my nature, that, unless you can afford me relief, I shall be of all men the most miserable.

*M.* The Lord, whose gracious office it is to comfort the people, will, I hope, give you an answer of peace; for he who convinces the heart of sin, can only convince also of the righteousness of the Saviour. And he who promised the one, promises no less the other. The same Almighty hand which wounds, is the only hand to heal. "I, (says God) even I, am he that comforteth you," Isa. li. 12. I hope, from what you have now said of your present misery, that it arises from the wounds of sin being laid bare to your view by the gracious dealings of your God; and I think it must strike you with full conviction, that no man, till he knows and feels his wounds, will be anxious for a cure. Men at ease and freedom may talk of chains, and coolly discourse about the sorrows of slavery; but he, and he only, who hath felt the chain, and groaned under the yoke of it, can say what it is, or describe the misery of the heart which ariseth from "hope long deferred," Prov. xiii. 12.

*P.* Oh, Sir! I feel indeed the chain; and truly groan after a freedom from it. The Lord hath led

me to know my utterly lost state by nature, and I have a lively sense and conviction of what you call 'the first leading point of the gospel.'—Tell me, Sir, I pray you, is there indeed any hope of salvation for so vile a sinner as I am?

*M.* Yes; blessed be God, there is. Christ is the restorer of our fallen nature, and an all-sufficient Saviour for sinners; and as God hath, in his abundant mercy, led you to see your want of salvation, I pray that he may lead you to see also the complete salvation there is in him. I shall be highly gratified indeed, if the Lord will mercifully condescend so far as to make me an instrument, upon this occasion, in pointing out the means by which his gracious purpose may be accomplished. But, first, let me ask you, whether, since our former conversation, you have not been endeavouring to find out some plan yourself, in order to recommend you to God, and to do somewhat by way of obtaining your own salvation?

*P.* O yes; for after my return home from you, the impression your words made upon my mind, immediately led me to the serious examination of my heart before God; and having made it a subject of prayer, as you recommended, I set about the work with great diligence. I found, upon looking back, that what I had before conceived to be righteousness before God, was full of unworthiness; and that even in my most holy things, I was unholy before him. I discovered also, that, not only in the past, but even in the present, the same bias to sin was in my nature; that "when I would do good, evil was present with me." Such views of the sinfulness of my nature brought tears into my eyes, and induced much sorrow of heart. Still hoping, however, that those fears would avail before God, and that I could rectify the past, I formed the strongest resolutions of amendment, and determined, in myself, to begin a new

life. But, alas! what the apostle found in his experience, I found in mine, that "the good I would I did not, but the evil that I would not, (in defiance of all my resolutions) that I did." And I have now at length discovered, as he did, "that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not." And under this conviction of mind, I find myself obliged continually to cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

*M.* These are humbling views, no doubt, of the miserable, helpless state of our fallen nature; but they are profitable to the soul, and afford strong evidences of the grace of God in the heart; for thus the Holy Ghost teaches his people, in order to lead them to the Saviour; and if you really feel what you express, I am very confident it is he who has revealed those things to you. For the unhumbled pride of man's heart, is always fancying he can do something of himself towards salvation. He fancies that he can repent when he pleases; that he can form resolutions, and put them in practice when he pleases; that he can make amends for the past by the future, and obtain the favour of God. But when the Lord condescends to become man's teacher, all these flights of fancy fall to the ground; he then learns that repentance is the gift of God alone; and that a man might as soon change the complexion of his countenance, as the complexion of his mind. That the strongest resolutions formed in his own strength, must fail; and that even if it were possible to keep them, the good conduct of the present can make no compensation towards God for the evil of the past. In short, that man, with his highest attainments by nature, hath not power of himself to think, much less to do any thing, as of himself; and that "all his sufficiency must be of God."

*P.* O, Sir, I see and feel the force of these truths. I am convinced that in myself I have no help, and therefore let me earnestly entreat you no longer to postpone the information you promised to give—'How I must be saved, and wherewith I shall come before the Lord?'

*M.* As I hope, and persuade myself, your mind is now prepared to receive those "glad tidings of good things," I shall most cheerfully enter upon this subject; and may he who hath convinced you of sin, convince you no less of the righteousness of the Saviour, and enable you to come to him in a way of faith and repentance. From the same divine authority by which we are informed of man's fall, by reason of sin, we are informed also of a gracious plan of salvation for his recovery. God, foreseeing the misery of mankind by the fall, provided a means for obtaining happiness again in redemption; and, from the foundation of the world, formed that scheme which is revealed to us in the gospel—that Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, who is "one with the Father, over all, God blessed for ever," and who hath glory with the Father before all worlds, at a certain period before determined in the council of heaven, called "the fulness of time," assuming a body such as ours in every point, sin only excepted, came into the world, and accomplished our salvation. Beginning at that point where our nature had failed, he fulfilled, to the most perfect exactness, the whole law of God; and having repaired the broken law, he offered himself a sacrifice upon the cross; so that having wrought out a perfect and finished righteousness in his life, he became a pure and spotless ransom in his death. And thus having upon earth, "finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness," he returned to the bosom of his Father, to complete the work of redemption, in becoming our Intercessor and Mediator with the Father, pleading his merits in behalf

of his people, and sending down the gifts of the Holy Spirit, to render the whole effectual in their hearts; that thus the redemption may be accomplished for them, until that period shall arrive when he will come in the clouds to judgment, agreeably to his promise, to receive all his faithful believing people to himself, that "where he is, there they may be also."

*P.* These precious truths, I thank God, I have already heard, by the hearing of the ear; but yet I do not understand how we are interested in their effects. How can my sins be transferred to the person of Jesus? or his righteousness be imputed to me?

*M.* Certainly, with as much justice and propriety as in the common circumstances of life. For example; suppose I owe you a sum of money, which I am unable to pay, may not some generous friend discharge the debt for me? And if he does, am I any longer your debtor? If I have forfeited my freedom by an act which I have committed, and cannot be liberated unless a ransom be made, yet, if that ransom be made, am not I free? Similar to these cases, only in an infinitely higher degree, is the instance before us. You and I, by sin, are become insolvent debtors to the law of God; and as that law pronounces a "curse upon every soul of man that doeth evil," it is plain that we are both under its condemning power. Now, in this situation, Christ appears as our representative, and takes both this debt and penalty upon himself; and is it not evident, then, that when he suffered on the cross, "he redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Could he pay the debt, and we still be debtors? Could he suffer the penalty of the law, and the bond not be cancelled? Here you see at once the broken law of God repaired, justice satisfied, the Saviour become the ransom, and the sinner set free! "By that one offering of himself, once offered, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." And thus that

important truth of scripture is completely explained and proved, that "God can be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," Rom. iii. 26. And as the sins of his people are thus transferred to the person of Jesus, and expiated by his sacrifice on the cross; so his righteousness is imputed to them also, and they are considered righteous before God in him. By taking our nature, Jesus becomes part of ourselves, or rather, his people are considered one with him. His actions for them, therefore, are imputed to them. "For their sakes," says Jesus, "I sanctify myself." What he is in a way of redemption, he is to them. Hence Paul says, "that the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is unto all, and upon all them that believe," Rom. iii. 32. Hence, also, the prophet, ages before our Lord came, expressly called him by this very name, "Jehovah, our righteousness," Jer. xxxiii. 17, a most delightful character for all his faithful people to know him by! He is indeed their righteousness, for "he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

*P.* Praised be the riches of divine grace, I think I begin to have some faint glimmering view of what you have been describing. May the Lord make it like the light of the morning, "which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

*M.* Let me for the present dismiss you under these impressions, and my prayers shall follow you, that the God of grace, which hath given you to see your misery by reason of sin, may lead you to "that Lamb of God which alone can take it away."

### DIALOGUE III.

*P.* I am come with a more cheerful heart to visit you than when I last came. My mind was then greatly distressed indeed, with the weight and burden of sin; but the views you then opened before me, of

the righteousness and all-sufficiency of the Saviour, with his gracious disposition to help poor sinners, have ever since comforted me. And if you can now as fully satisfy my mind upon the third particular you proposed, I shall have cause indeed to pray the Lord to recompence your labour.

*M.* The blessing you are in search of, my christian brother, like all others of a gracious nature, I hope you know to be the sole gift of God. Jesus is both the "author and finisher of faith; and every good and every perfect gift cometh from him." But if the Lord in his abundant mercy hath begun the manifestation of his grace in your heart, you have every reason to hope and to believe, that he will carry on and complete the work until the day of his coming; for never did he excite spiritual desires in the soul, but with an intention to gratify them. When he makes a poor sinner sensible of his burden of sin, it is that he may "come unto him, and find rest unto his soul." When he creates hunger and thirst in the soul, it is that all such may come unto him to be filled. I persuade myself that God by his Holy Spirit hath both convinced you of sin and of the righteousness of the Saviour; and, under these impressions, you are now coming to him, in the language of the poor leper in the gospel, crying out, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

*P.* This, Sir, if I do not deceive myself, (which I trust I do not,) is my present state. I am most awfully convinced of the leprous state of my sinful soul, as it must appear before God; and I am as fully satisfied of the all-sufficiency of Jesus to cleanse me. I am convinced that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." But whether he will condescend to cleanse me; whether I am the object of his grace and mercy; this is the grand point I want to know.

*M.* And a grand and most important point it is! For, without this personal interest in Christ, however

precious the Saviour's name and offices are to others, yet he cannot be precious to you. "To them that believe," the apostle says, "he is precious." But it cannot be only to them. It is not the fields, or the houses, or the wealth of another man, that can be my treasure. The hungry soul cannot be fed with beholding the most plentiful table, unless he partake of it; neither can the naked find warmth from another man's clothing. In like manner, another man's Christ, (if I may be allowed the expression,) can be nothing to me, unless he is my Christ also. Religion is a personal thing, and it must be brought home to the heart by a personal application before it hath completed its purpose. Your salvation and my salvation are the grand objects with each individually considered; and, until we have obtained the assurance of it, each for himself, the main point in religion is not answered.

*P.* All this is true, Sir, and is the very object I am in pursuit of.

*M.* And I doubt not, but if "by prayer and supplication you make your requests known unto God," you will find the divine promise fulfilled in your own experience, in finding that peace with God which all who are justified by faith, find through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*P.* But can it be possible that a sinner of my description, whose offences have been so many and so aggravated, can be entitled to the rich promises of the gospel?

*M.* Certainly; because it is for characters of this very description the gospel is intended. "I came not," says Jesus, "to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. I came to seek and save the lost." And if your heart subscribes to this description, in saying, that must be me, for in myself I am lost,—do you not see that you are the very character Jesus points at? Nay,

though you were the chief of sinners, the encouragement is not lessened, but increased; for Paul the apostle, who considered himself under the same description, tells us, that it was "for this cause he obtained mercy, that in him Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them that should hereafter believe on him unto everlasting life." And the earnest invitations of Jesus, seconded by his gracious promises, and followed up as they are, in the illustrious examples of some of the vilest and most worthless of men, who have been gathered from the very refuse of the earth, and washed in the blood of the Lamb,—all these are so many proofs to testify by plain matter of fact, that the Redeemer stands with open arms to receive "all that come to him; and all that do come, he will in no wise cast out." So that, are you weary and heavily laden with the burden of sin? "Come unto me," says Christ, "and I will give you rest." Are you hungering and thirsting after the righteousness of the Saviour? Jesus says, all that hunger and thirst shall be filled. "Ho! every one that thirsteth," is the call; "come ye to the waters and drink: and he that hath no money," (no merit, nothing to recommend,) "come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price."

*P.* I am comforted by what you say, and begin to hope, that as I really feel those evidences of the renewed life, I shall at length attain, through divine mercy, in the diligent use of the several means of grace afforded, to a full assurance that Christ is my Saviour.

*M.* The Lord grant that you may! But, however earnest in the pursuit of it, let me remind you of one thing, namely, not to be impatient in the expectation. The gracious God that laid in Zion, the tried stone for a foundation, declared that "he that believeth in him, shall not make haste," Isa. xxviii. 6. It is not for us to know the times or the seasons which the Lord hath

appointed. "When the fulness of time is come, God will send the Spirit of his Son into your heart, whereby you will be enabled to cry, Abba, Father." I have only to add an earnest prayer, that the Lord may sanctify what hath been said; "and may the God of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you! To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." 1 Pet. v. 10, 11.

## XVII.

### SOLEMN QUESTIONS FOR MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

### PART I.

The first leading doctrine of the Church of England service, is a view of our character before God.

The church service opens with very suitable portions of scripture, to excite the attention of the people to divine worship; and then proceeds to an exhortation, in which they are earnestly entreated "to acknowledge and confess their manifold sins and wickedness; and not to dissemble nor cloke them before the face of Almighty God; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart;" and, agreeably to this exhortation, the whole congregation fall upon their knees, and make their humble confession to Almighty God, in the most solemn expressions of self-condemnation and unworthiness that language can employ. And this confession of sins is uniformly pursued through every part of the service; so that the character in which every such individual is supposed to appear before God, is that of a self-condemned sinner.

In the general confession, we declare, that "we have erred and strayed from God's ways like lost sheep; that we have followed too much the devices and desires of our hearts; have offended against his holy laws; have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and done those things which we ought not to have done; and that there is no health in us;" and under this sense of our sin and unworthiness, we beg of God to be merciful to us "miserable offenders." In like manner, in the communion service, we declare, "we bewail our manifold sins and wickedness; that we do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings;

that the remembrance of them is grievous unto us; the burden of them intolerable." Indeed, what are all those responses, in which we confess our sins, and implore God to be "merciful to us miserable sinners," but so many proofs that this is the leading character in which our church considers the subject? For surely if these expressions mean any thing, they mean that all the congregation, as well minister as people, come under the character of self-condemned sinners before God; and sinners in whom there is no health, no power of self-deliverance; and they are not only sinners, but *miserable* sinners, who bewail their sins; to whom "the remembrance of them is grievous, and the burden intolerable," and who cry out, under an afflicting sense of the chain they feel, for deliverance and salvation.

I would now desire my reader to pause one moment, and propose to himself those solemn questions which naturally arise out of the first view of our subject; and that I may not offend, I shall bring my own heart under the examination, as that with which I have a right to make free.

I will consider myself, then, as entering upon public worship, and having called the attention of the people, by reading one or more of the portions of scripture appointed for that purpose, I exhort them "to acknowledge and confess their manifold sins and wickedness;" and under these solemn impressions, as the leader in prayer, I draw near the mercy-seat, advancing, as it were, a step before the people, (for this is all along understood) and begin that solemn prayer of humiliation just noticed, in which I have earnestly besought the congregation to follow me.

Suppose an uninterested person were to come into the assembly, and were to ask me, 'Pray, Sir, are you in jest or in earnest in all this?' What should I answer him? Doth the reader shudder at the bare possi-

bility that the thing remains doubtful? Well then may I? But yet, am not I in jest if my tongue agree not with the sentiments of my heart? Am I not in jest, if I profess myself to be a miserable sinner, while yet I never felt any misery in sin, or any desire of deliverance from it? Am I not in jest, to tell God that "there is no health in me," that is, no health of soul, not the smallest degree of goodness to recommend me to his mercy, and yet fancy myself a very worthy character, and one justly entitled to his divine favour? In short, am I not in jest, not only while reading the prayers, but going through the whole of the church service, to speak of "the burden of sin as intolerable," which I never felt; of "being heartily sorry for my misdoings," for which I never truly sorrowed in heart; and of "earnestly repenting of manifold sins and wickedness," unconcerned all the while how many or how aggravated those manifold sins are, and unconscious what earnest repentance (which is the gift of God alone) means?

I pause over an examination so infinitely interesting, involving, as it doth, such important consequences; and, under an awful sense of his inspection, "who trieth the heart, and searcheth the reins," I would very earnestly desire to arrive at some certain decision on this great point. It cannot be a matter difficult to attain, if examined only by the corresponding conduct;—for example, if I am really sincere in my conviction of the important truths before mentioned, and do from my heart believe in the doctrine of the fallen state of human nature, all my preaching, as well as my conduct in the world, will agree with it. Confessing, while in the desk, myself and people to be helpless sinners before God, I shall not in the pulpit cry up the moral rectitude of human nature; nor, in defiance of my own declarations, and the testimony of scripture, contend that man is able to help himself, and exhort the congrega-

tion to do that of themselves, which, just before, we all declared we are incapable of doing. Neither shall I profess in the church, before God, that I am miserable by reason of sin, and in the world, before men, manifest that I am happy in the enjoyment of it.

Nor let the reader who is not of the sacred order imagine, that this inquiry is uninteresting to him; for if there be no union between the heart and the tongue in seasons of devotion, it is evident that we cannot come within the description of those "who worship God in spirit and in truth." After the outline I have sketched for my own examination, suffer me, my dear reader, to add, that your sincerity before God may be ascertained by a similar standard; for if you express sorrow for sin which you never felt, and a misery in sin which you never knew, if you cry out under a consciousness of having broke God's commandments, "Lord, have mercy upon me, and incline my heart to keep this law," and yet rise from your knees perfectly unconscious of your guilt and danger, and unconcerned whether you obtain the mercy you implore or not; if in the common service of the church you uniformly confess yourself to be a sinner, and in the ordinary walk of life as uniformly "thank God that you are not as other men are;" if in the dedication of yourself to God you profess to present yourself "a living sacrifice, as your reasonable service," and desire that henceforth you may be enabled to "walk in newness of life;" and yet out of the church are found walking "in the vanity of your mind,"—the prophet Isaiah hath exactly drawn your character when he saith, "He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand?" Isa. xliv. 20.

## PART II.

In all the offices of the Church of England, salvation is uniformly set forth as the effect of the sole merit, righteousness, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It has been shewn, from undeniable evidence, that the first leading object in the established worship, is to impress upon the mind a true sense of the sinful, fallen, helpless state of man. The next design, which is as steadily followed up in every part of the service, is to direct to the person and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only restorer of our fallen nature. There is a beautiful order in this method of worship, which, though perhaps overlooked by many, is worthy the observation of all. The church, having first aimed to impress the congregation with a deep sense of the sins and miseries of nature, then endeavours to lead the heart which is wounded by sin to the means of recovery; and having awakened the recollection to a view that in ourselves we have no help, to point to him who alone can say unto the soul, "I am thy salvation."

That this is a leading point in all the church services, when speaking of the person and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ, will appear from the slightest view.

In the office of baptism, having been first reminded that all men are conceived and born in sin; and that our Saviour Christ saith, "none can enter into the kingdom of God except he be regenerated and born anew of water and the Holy Ghost," the congregation are desired to "call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of his bounteous mercy he will grant that which by nature we cannot have:" and what this is, the whole service is careful to inform us; namely, the being washed from our sins in the blood of Christ, and regenerated by the Holy Ghost; for which purpose, as one of the prayers strongly expresses it, "The most dearly beloved Son of God, Jesus Christ,

did shed out of his most precious side both water and blood."

In the catechism, the same leading truth is kept up. In speaking of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, we are taught that "the inward and spiritual grace" of the former is, "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; because being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are thereby made the children of grace:" and the latter, "being for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby," the inward part, or thing signified is, "the body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper."

Whenever the forgiveness of sins is spoken of, and held forth to the penitent, it is proclaimed "according to the promise declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord." Almost every prayer concludes with this as the leading idea, that the salvation of sinners is in and through Jesus Christ our Lord. In the *Te Deum* we call upon the Redeemer, under his most gracious character, as the everlasting Son of the Father, "who, when he took upon him to deliver man, and had overcome the sharpness of death, did open the kingdom of heaven to all believers." And in the contemplation of this rich mercy, "we therefore pray him to help his servants whom he hath redeemed with his most precious blood." In the Litany, we implore "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, to grant us his peace: not to remember our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers, neither to take vengeance of our sins, but to spare his people, whom he hath redeemed with his most precious blood; and not to be angry with us for ever." And still following up the same petition, we call upon him "to deliver

us by his cross and passion, his glorious resurrection and ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost."

In the exhortation to the most comfortable ordinance of the body and blood of Christ, it is expressly said "to be received in remembrance of his meritorious cross and passion, whereby alone we obtain remission of sins, and are made partakers of the kingdom of heaven." And the whole design of that refreshing service is directed to this one end; that, as "the Lord Jesus Christ, when suffering death upon the cross for our redemption, by the one oblation of himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world,"—the faithful communicants desire "so to eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood, that their sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and their souls washed through his most precious blood." And, in the last office, for the burial of the dead, salvation through the merits and death of the Lord Jesus Christ is uniformly held forth. The ashes of true believers are committed to the dust of the earth, "in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be like his glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself."

The inquiry under this article in our church service, is, do we, or do we not, accept this great doctrine of the church, agreeably to the liturgy, and our uniform profession of it in our services and prayers? Pause, my brother, of what character soever you may be, pause a moment over the important question.

Am I a minister of the church of England? If then I am sincere in my profession, that I am seeking salvation only through the merits, righteousness, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, I shall be continually

holding him up to my people in his person and offices under this interesting character. I shall be continually directing sinners to him "as the Alpha and Omega, the Author and Finisher of salvation." And my determination will be, like that of the great apostle, "to know nothing among men but Christ Jesus, and him crucified." What is the fact concerning this department of my ministry? Do I thus preach Christ? Is his adorable name the chief topic of every discourse, and, to endear him to sinners, the sole object of my preaching? In short, is it the uniform labour of every sermon, to manifest that "there is salvation in no other, neither is there any other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved?" If so, there will be a happy correspondence between my preaching and the doctrine of the established church in all its departments; and this leading point of seeking salvation through Christ, will appear uppermost in all my ministrations: "my speech and my preaching," like that of the apostle's, will not be "with enticing words of man's wisdom;" for this is to preach self, and not Christ Jesus the Lord. I shall not declaim on the moral excellence of human nature, while our church prayers, with one voice, continually declare we have no health, no excellence in us; neither shall I recommend that human strength be exerted in acts of moral virtue to procure our salvation, while the same form of worship solemnly assures us, that in "God alone is our help found." This would be indeed to preach "Moses, as of old time;" but it would not be to preach "the Lord Jesus Christ." And while I am careful to follow the doctrine and liturgy of the church, in holding up the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of sinners, I shall never direct the congregation to seek salvation partly by their own works and partly by his; for this is a mongrel religion, unknown in scripture. It is not the doctrine of the law; for that pronounces a

curse upon "every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10. Neither is it the gospel; for that expressly says, "we are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast," Eph. ii. 3, 9.

I pause—to examine both the fact and its solemn consequence. Awful as it is, to behold the deceitfulness of the human heart in its duplicity between man and man, in the common circumstances of life, yet, when that duplicity is exercised in matters of an eternal moment towards the infinite Majesty of heaven, it puts on a more malignant, a more dangerous form. The fallacious reasonings of the human heart may amuse and satisfy my mind in a light and inconsiderate hour; but the time is approaching when it will appear that there can be but one standard of truth; and that the estimate of it is not to be formed by the caprice of men, but by the word of God. If, therefore, I am sincere, I must preach Jesus as "the way, the truth, and the life." And as the church in all her offices, homilies, articles, liturgy, uniformly holds forth salvation through the alone merits, righteousness, and death of the Lord Jesus, my preaching will carry with it a complete correspondence; that, as the apostle says, "seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God," 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

But while I desire the Lord to "try me and search the ground of my heart" on this great point, I would very affectionately desire the reader, though he be not of the sacred order, not to let the question pass unexamined by him, as though it concerned only the minis-

ter of the sanctuary. Every member of the established church is most highly interested, to know whether his outward profession in creeds and prayers corresponds with his inward conviction and sincere belief before God;—for to profess, in all the different parts of the liturgy, as is evidently done, that I am seeking salvation only through the merits and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet, in actions, to prove that I am seeking it in another way; to address the Redeemer by prayer, as the Lamb of God, who alone taketh away the sins of the world, and to manifest disapprobation of that preaching, which declares that there is salvation in no other; to declare before God continually, in every renewed attendance on the church, that I am a miserable sinner, in whom there is no health and, in the same moment, to desire that my righteousnesss may be accepted as a mean of salvation, in conjunction with the righteousness of Christ—what is all this but deception of the mind, and in the most sacred concerns manifesting that though "we draw nigh to God with our mouth, our hearts are far from him?"

## PART III.

Another leading doctrine of the Church of England service is, that of the blessed Spirit's work in the heart, in "taking of the things of Jesus, to shew them unto his people."—John xvi. 14, 15.

As the finishing of the whole, the church directs to "the blessed Spirit's work in the heart," as that alone which can render the whole plan of redemption effectual, by a personal application of the Saviour's merits to the sinner's necessities; and as this becomes so highly important, the church is careful in all her services, to keep a constant and unremitting attention to this great office of the Holy Spirit, that both minister

and people may implore his aid, and desire to be under the direction of his gracious influence.

This is obvious, as a prominent feature through the whole church service, where almost every office begins with a prayer similar in effect, if not in words, to the order for morning and evening prayer daily throughout the year, that "the Lord would open our lips, that our mouth might shew forth his praise; that God would make speed to save us; and the Lord make haste to help us." Surely it can require no particular proof, that the leading point, uniformly kept up through all our worship is, that from him "all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed;" and that, as one of the prayers expresses it, "because, through the frailty of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without him," we earnestly beg, above all things, "the aids of his grace, that he would make clean our hearts within us, and take not his Holy Spirit from us."

Indeed, as the application of Christ and his benefits to the soul is the grand object of which all the ordinances of worship are appointed, and all this it is the office of the Holy Spirit to perform, it is not to be wondered at that the church should so earnestly study to inculcate the vast importance of this principle on the minds of the minister and congregation; for the one cannot preach profitably, neither the other hear to any saving purpose, but from his blessed teaching. It is the Spirit's work to "convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment," John xvi. 8. It is his peculiar office to glorify the Lord Jesus in "taking of his things to shew them to his people," John xvi. 14. No grace can be first awakened in the soul, but from his quickening, Eph. ii. 1. No grace called forth into exercise, but from his power, Phil. ii. 13, 15. Not a promise can the soul plead, but of the Spirit's shewing, John xvi. 15. Not an argument in prayer,

but of the Spirit's framing, Rom. viii. 26. And although the Lord Jesus stands revealed in the scripture, as "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," yet he is not so to us, unless made so by the blessed Spirit's agency, 1 Cor. i. 30.

An inquiry more interesting, both to the minister and people, cannot be proposed, than what this view of the importance of the Holy Ghost's work on the heart occasions; whether the one be careful to hold up in all his ministrations the indispensable necessity of the Spirit's teaching; and the other to implore the hearing ear and the seeing eye; without which the ministry of men and angels will be but as "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

Surely, it is a solemn question, whether it be our uniform study and desire to come under the divine teachings, both before we engage in our solemn services, during the season that we are in the exercise of worship, hearing or reading the word, and after our religious duties are ended; or whether we come before the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, with heedlessness of character, as "the horse rusheth into the battle?"

If my reader be of the clergy, I would very earnestly and affectionately recommend to him these solemn considerations: for if it be your province, O man of God, to minister in holy things, and if you are really desirous not to labour in vain, nor spend your strength for nought, you will seek in every ministration the direction and influence of the Holy Ghost; without which you will most assuredly be unsuccessful. You cannot have a better standard to ascertain your ministerial character by, than that you undertake nothing but in the Spirit's strength; go forth in nothing but by his commission, and depend upon nothing but his blessing. And if my reader be of the laity, similar observations will as readily answer to his own mind those solemn

questions in which he is equally interested, as to his private and personal concern respecting the Spirit's work in the heart. The soul that is really and truly taught of God, cannot but know that the Spirit's influence is essential to the properly performing of every good word and work. It is he who must first awaken to a sense of sin, and to a knowledge of want in the soul; it is he who can alone quicken the soul from dead works to serve the living and true God; and it is his blessed office to begin, carry on, and complete the work of grace, until Christ be fully formed in the heart, the hope of glory.

O Lord! diffuse on every one the rich anointings of thine Holy Spirit, that we may rejoice in the fulness of that finished salvation which is in Christ Jesus the Lord, to the glory of God the Father!

## XVIII.

### A LETTER ON THE SUBJECT OF CONFIRMATION.

Having been directed, in my parochial character, by the bishop of the diocese, to give notice in my church of his intention of holding a confirmation sometime during the present summer in Plymouth, and in consequence of which, some of you having intimated to me that it is your desire to embrace the opportunity of being confirmed, I have conceived it to be my duty, to convey to you, through the medium of a letter, the best instruction I am capable of affording you on the subject, in order that your attendance on this ordinance of worship, may not be the mere effect of an hereditary custom, because the age of fifteen seems to demand it from you, but rather the sober result of a deliberate, well formed, and gracious conviction of its propriety; that being awakened by the Spirit of God, to a serious concern for the "one thing needful," and feeling an earnest desire of embracing every opportunity which may minister to this important purpose, you are looking to the ordinance of confirmation as one among the many means, which under God's blessing, may tend "to make you wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Before I enter upon the subject, I would beg to premise, that it is not my intention, from thus addressing you by letter, to supersede the necessity of speaking to you in the church on the same topic, previous to the time of your being confirmed; for this I purpose also to do, if God permit, once at least in every week, by way of comment, or lecture, on the confirmation service, after evening prayers; of which timely notice shall be given. But my present calling upon you in this man-

ner, is intended as preparatory for your better apprehension of the subject, and of what may then be delivered. A written document on some of the more prominent points of confirmation, in enabling you to have frequent recourse to it, will probably conduce to leave a stronger and more lasting impression on the mind, than the transiency of an address by word of mouth can be supposed to effect. And both together will, I hope, mutually subserve under the divine teachings, not only to give you a proper idea of the nature and design of confirmation, but to enable you "to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."

It would be going very much out of my way, and taking a larger circuit than is necessary, to tread over the ground of inquiry respecting the origin and propriety of confirmation. They who contend for its observance, trace up the authority to the days of the apostles; and in addition to this testimony in its favour, shew us also, that the custom was followed by the succeeding age of the fathers.

The chief passages of scripture on which the stress of the argument is placed in justification of it, are taken from the history of the apostles ministry. We read in the 8th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that Peter and John prayed and laid their hands on the baptized Samaritans, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. And in like manner we read, that after the Ephesians had been baptized, and Paul had laid his hands on them, "the Holy Ghost came on them."

That confirmation, or the laying on of hands, was a distinct ordinance from baptism, is evident, not only from these testimonies, but from a passage in the 6th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, where the inspired writer speaks distinctly of baptism, and afterwards connects with it, as a service that was to follow,

"the laying on of hands." Indeed, I believe few writers have ever questioned but that it was a religious rite of the church, practised by the apostles.

It should seem to have been used also in the church in the subsequent ages, if we may credit the testimony of ecclesiastical history.

Tertullian, one of the earliest fathers, whose writings are now extant, speaking of the subject, says, that "after baptism, was observed the laying on of hands, by prayer, invocation, and praying for the Holy Spirit." —*Tertull. de Bapt. c.* 8.

Cyprian also, in his history of the Samaritan converts, speaks of the practice that was used among the disciples in his age, that "they who were baptized in the church, were presented to the governors of it, that by prayers and the imposition of hands, they might obtain the Holy Ghost, and be perfected with the seal of Christ."—*Cypr. Epist.* 73.

And Jerome, yet more directly to the purpose, says, "If you ask where confirmation is written? I answer, it is written in the Acts of the Apostles.—But if there were no authority of scripture for it, yet the consent of all the world in this particular is instead of a command."—*Jerom Dialog. adv. Lucifer.*

But waving all authority from the opinion of usage of the fathers on this subject, supposing that it be founded on the sense of scripture only, or supposing that it be but agreeable to the tenor of scripture; nay, even supposing that it could be altogether proved to be an human institution, unauthorized by the word of God, (provided it be not found in contradiction to it) still I should humbly conceive it would be a very proper, and even advisable plan, to bring young persons together as soon as a sufficient ripeness of years had made them competent to the purpose, that they might in a solemn manner before the presence of Almighty God, and in the face of the church assembled for that

purpose, confirm their baptismal vow, and in a public acknowledgment of their faith take upon them in a more open and avowed manner the profession of christianity. Surely no one can imagine, that an ordinance of this nature, when seriously and devoutly performed, could be injurious! I say 'when seriously and devoutly performed,' for I lay great stress upon the "prepared state of the mind" in the candidates for confirmation, and the solemnity of the *manner* in which the ordinance is observed. It must be very obvious that where the youth themselves are uninformed in the first principles of grace, and the service of confirmation is regarded with irreverence and inattention, devout impressions are not likely to follow. And there can be no doubt but that the tumultuous and disorderly manner in which in times past confirmation hath been distinguished, hath tended to throw great reproach upon the ordinance itself. But where the candidates for confirmation are properly qualified, in that "preparation of the heart and answer of the tongue, which are from the Lord," and under the divine teachings and leadings they are brought to the house of prayer, "to give an answer to the hope that is in them with meekness and fear;" there is ample encouragement from every part of the word of God to hope that a divine blessing must follow. The imagination cannot form a more pleasing sight than to see a multitude of our youth brought together into the house of God for such a purpose. At a time when the incautious and unsuspecting traveller of life is just entering for himself the perilous path, with his passions strong, and his reason weak; parental authority every day lessening, and self-confidence increasing; to call him aside in the onset of his journey, to remind him of his high calling in Christ Jesus; to pray over him, and pray with him, and to recommend him to his grace, "who alone can keep him from falling;" and who hath promised, that

"if in all our ways we acknowledge him, he will direct our paths:" is there not great reason to hope, that such an observance, and at such a time, when early impressions are likely to leave very powerful and abiding effects upon the heart, might receive the blessing of heaven to counteract youthful propensities to evil, and to become the means under God, of awakening a new and spiritual life! What blessings are too great to look for, from the united prayers of a congregation, (and some of them perhaps the parents and spiritual guardians of the youth themselves) assembled together for the express purpose of drawing nigh a throne of grace, in behalf of the young and inexperienced of our people? He of whom it was long prophesied, that when on earth "he should gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom;" will he not now he is in heaven, graciously receive the young of his fold which are brought unto him? Did he not in the days of his flesh "take them up in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them?" And can it be supposed that in the day of his power "his arm is shortened that it cannot save, or his ear grown heavy that it cannot hear?" Did he command the children to be brought to him, and will he refuse them when brought?

Indeed, the consequences of such animated devotion, as may be supposed to arise from a numerous assembly, quickened by a spirit of grace, and coming up from so many hearts through the great Redeemer's merits and intercession before God, we may confidently hope, will not be confined to the children alone, but be reverted back upon the parents themselves and all the congregation. For I think it impossible to behold so affecting a sight, as that of the solemn dedication of our youth to God, taking upon them their baptismal vow, and making an open profession of their faith, without having the mind involuntarily led as it were into a

train of reflections, how equally binding those engagements are upon ourselves also, and how much every one is involved for himself in the same solemn responsibility. And hence sentiments of devotion, through his gracious operations who alone quickens the soul, may be awakened in every heart, and the holy fire once kindled by "the live coal from off the altar" create a flame of devotion all around. So that they who come to pray for the salvation of others, may depart with more awakened earnestness to pray for their own.

But though I conceive these arguments unanswerably conclusive in favour of the ordinance of confirmation, yet I should be leading you into too much intricacy were I to open the path of dispute which those have trodden who contend against it. My province is not to dispute, but to explain. I am simply to consider you as coming to me (and which is really the case) under the conviction of its propriety, and inquiring after the best method of performing it. And under those ideas I venture to offer you my thoughts upon the subject, praying that the great Head of his church and people may render them profitable to you, in giving you "the light of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ."

It will immediately strike you, that the foundation for deriving benefit from this, or any other ordinance of worship, must depend in a right apprehension of the ordinance itself. For while we consider the several means of grace as means only, and not the end, and use them as such, in making them the medium or channel of bringing the heart to God, all may be rendered profitable, and become instrumental to this purpose.

The confirmation service keeps this expressly in view; for it opens with a preface to intimate who the proper persons are to whom it is to be administered, and the qualifications expected in them; that by a

proper apprehension of its design, they may come prepared to partake in its benefits, and not rush unthinkingly as the horse to the battle.

To accomplish this purpose, after the exhortation, a question is solemnly proposed by the bishop himself to each of the several persons to be confirmed, not unsimilar to the one proposed to the candidates for holy orders. In the ordination service, the demand is; "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you the office of a deacon?" And in the confirmation service, the question is, "Do you here in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your baptism?" &c. The question is varied from the different occasion on which it is administered, but the sum and substance is the same. For as in the one instance, if the candidate for holy orders doth not actually feel that gracious influence which in reply he solemnly declares moves him to the sacred office; and if in the other, the candidate for confirmation is not sincere in taking upon him the promise made for him in baptism, which he in answer as solemnly makes from a due conviction of its propriety and importance, both are alike guilty of duplicity and prevarication.

The preparatory step, therefore, to a right performance of every duty must depend upon a right apprehension of that duty. A promise so truly solemn, and involving in it such a train of consequences, made in such a place, and before such witnesses, ought to be the result of much deliberation, profound reverence, and devout prayer. For if it be done without due regard to the thing intended, we grossly deceive ourselves; and if without sincerity we are found false witnesses before God.

Shall I desire you previously to pause, and ask your own heart, what do you know of the "solemn promise

and vow which was made in your name at your baptism," and which in the act of confirmation you take upon yourself to fulfil? Will you answer the question also to your own heart, what is the belief which respects all the articles of the christian faith? And lastly, what your ideas are of doing all those things which were then undertaken for you? These three distinct particulars comprise the substance of the question which the bishop proposeth to you on the very moment you begin the confirmation service, and to which it is expected that you give a direct and unequivocal answer, "I do." And doth it not strike you with full conviction, that a clear apprehension of the subject ought to be the foundation for making this answer in the face of God and the congregation?

I would persuade myself that you are sufficiently instructed in the leading principle of our most holy faith, as to know that the christian religion (the open profession of which you take upon you in the act of confirmation) is distinguished from all others by certain doctrines which are peculiarly her own. It is not a system of morality proposed to us in the new testament, for if the observance of moral precepts had been enough for salvation, the doctrine of Epictetus would have answered the purpose, and the principles of the Roman and Lacedonian heathens, who excelled in morals, but perished in idolatry, would have superseded the necessity of the gospel of Christ. Neither is it the law of Moses; "for if righteousness be by the law, Christ is dead in vain." Though no man can be truly religious who is immoral, because grace in the heart must ever produce its corresponding effects in the life, yet the reverse of this proposition will not be the same; for many a man may be highly moral, and yet not possess an atom of religion. For morality begins and ends in the duties belonging to man; whereas true religion is wholly founded in the

fear and love of God. But the distinguishing feature of the christian religion is, that it considers all men as guilty, helpless, and condemned sinners before God; nay, even "dead in trespasses and sins;" and as incompetent to do any one act towards their own recovery, as an inanimate and lifeless corpse towards its own re-animation. It teaches therefore, that the alone principle of giving life to the soul dead in trespasses and sins, must originate in the quickening influences of the Holy Spirit; and that the only source of giving pardon to the sinner must be found in the blood of Christ. Hence the great Author of the christian faith laid the whole foundation of his religion in the doctrine of regeneration; and taught, that the only means of acceptance before God, is in the sole merits of Christ. To this purport he declared, that "except a man was born again, he could not see the kingdom of God; and except he eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, he had no life in him." The union of these principles form the peculiar and distinguishing doctrines of the gospel. And it is into the profession of this faith you enter, when in the ordinance of confirmation, you take upon you the promise made for you in baptism. In the very front of which stands the doctrine of regeneration, and is at the portal of christianity, that none can enter in but by this way. And within the whole substance of the temple worship, refers to nothing as the efficient means of salvation, but the doing and the dying of the Lord Jesus. So that without these great effects are induced, it may be said of confirmation, as the apostle hath of another ordinance, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

Called upon, therefore, as you are, in the solemn act of confirmation, to declare your personal consent to the vows of baptism, and your sincere and cordial belief in all the articles of the christian faith; let me earnestly

exhort you previously to make it the frequent and the serious consideration of a retired hour; and as seriously to consider the very solemn situation in which it involves you. And above all, beg of God for the gift of his Holy Spirit to guide you, without which you can neither have the clear apprehension of any one religious duty, or the smallest power of performing it. Under the impression which I have of the sacredness of the service, if I were about to be confirmed, I should first propose to myself such questions as these; what is the idea which I have of the nature and design of that ordinance? What is my intention, personally considered, in wishing to partake of it? If I am to ratify and confirm, in that service, the vows made for me in baptism, am I perfectly satisfied with the nature of the vows themselves, and the obligations in which they involve me? Those vows implicate man's fallen state, his total inability before God to do any thing towards his own recovery, and that his restoration to favour and happiness is the sole result of divine grace, through the merits, righteousness, and death of Christ. Am I so convinced of these truths as to be truly awakened to an earnestness in seeking the things that make for my everlasting peace, before they are for ever hid from my eyes?

These, and the like questions, closely and faithfully applied to the heart, will soon bring information, under God's help, whether a life of grace is begun in the soul, and of consequence whether your ideas of the ordinance of confirmation be well founded.

If you say, "who is sufficient for these things?" Scripture, which proposes the question, at the same time answers it; "All sufficiency (we are told) is from God." And agreeably to this, in the very opening of the confirmation service, the bishop declares for himself, and the whole congregation, "our help is in the name of the Lord." And this idea of man's impotence, and

the Holy Spirit's all-sufficiency, like a golden thread, not only runs through the whole of the ordinance of confirmation, but through every part of our most excellent liturgy. How exceedingly to this purpose are the prayers which follow in the confirmation service ;— "Almighty and everliving God, vouchsafe to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and give them forgiveness of all their sins. Strengthen them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength; the spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of holy fear."

And in the last prayer but one before the blessing, are similar sweet expressions offered up, to imply, that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," and therefore most earnestly to implore the Spirit of God to be "the guide of their youth." The bishop says, "Almighty God, who makest us both to will and to do those things that be good and acceptable unto thy Divine Majesty, we make our humble supplications unto thee, for these thy servants, upon whom (after the example of thy holy apostles) we have now laid our hands, to certify them (by this sign) of thy favour and goodness towards them. Let thy fatherly hand, we beseech thee, ever be over them; let thy Holy Spirit ever be with them; and so lead them in the knowledge and obedience of thy word, that in the end they may obtain everlasting life, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

You see how intimately incorporated, through every part of the service, the inability of man, and the necessity of divine grace is, towards the attainment of salvation. And young as you are, I trust in God his blessed Spirit will give you sufficient grace to discern, not only

the vast importance of keeping up a constant attention to this first great principle of action, but also to preserve you from the dreadful doctrine and example of those, who, though going to God in prayer with the daily confession that it is the Holy Spirit alone that can direct the heart, and influence the life, yet deny his operations upon the soul, and like the Ephesians of old, are unconscious "whether there be any Holy Ghost!"

I very earnestly desire to commit and "commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified."

## XIX.

### THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY.

Among the many sacred subjects which God the Holy Ghost is teaching the spiritual church of our most glorious Christ, there are two which stand eminently conspicuous in the divine records; and from their vast importance, demand our daily study; namely, the one, "the mystery of iniquity," 2 Thess. ii. 7. the other, "the mystery of godliness," 1 Tim. iii. 16. The former, constitutes in its several bearings, the whole of human evil by nature; the latter, the whole of human happiness by grace. From the one, we are involved in all the guilt and condemnation of the Adam-fall transgression, by our natural union with the "first man, who is of the earth, earthy;" from the other, we are interested in all the holiness and blessedness of the mighty restoration by our grace union with the "second man, who is the Lord from heaven," 1 Cor. xv. 47.

The "mystery of iniquity," (which is to form the subject of the present tract) is so deep and fathomless, that it baffles all the faculties of created intellect, whether angels or men, to discover. And though we all feel, and know, and rue the solemn truth, both by the raging influence of sin in our innumerable depravities, and the miseries which follow; yet what sin is, in its origin, its nature, its essence, we have no traces to go by for the investigation. The sacred word of God hath simply stated the awful truth, with the tremendous consequences arising therefrom, and the relation proceeds no further. We are told, that "by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," Rom. v. 12. And we behold the solemn sentence daily

proved in the dying and the dead. Neither hath the death of millions made the least alteration or abatement in the event. The virus of the poison of sin, through the long period of nearly six thousand years, is not lessened in its baleful malignity. It as effectually kills now as when the first sinner died; and it hews down with one common scythe, the suckling and the aged. The very nature of man is alike involved in the same common destruction by reason of sin. And the jaws of death are not satisfied in devouring the vast majority already consumed, but in the lesser number remaining, he waits to fill up the measure in the whole, "For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still." Such is the mystery of iniquity in this universal point of view!

But the subject increaseth in awfulness as we prosecute it further. For what tends to render the alarming contemplation of it, yet more abundantly alarming is, that neither the death of sinners, nor the everlasting misery of sinners, make any alteration on sin itself. Such is the mystery of iniquity, that with the death of the body, there is no cessation of sin in the unredeemed soul. Here, indeed, is one of the distinguishing characters in the mystery of iniquity. Such is the nature, and such are the effects of sin, after the death of the body, that both the guilt and punishment remain, in all the bitterness of woe, to all eternity. And the scriptures explain the causes, in that sin itself, inherent sin remains. We read, therefore, of a "second death," Rev. xx. 14. and which is elsewhere in the word of God explained as the total separation both of soul and body from God to all eternity. Not a cessation of being, but a being of inconceivable sorrow. Our Lord hath described it, under the alarming similitudes of "a worm that dieth not, and a fire that is not quenched." And as if to leave the impression in all its full bearings, of the unutterable horrors and anguish of soul, the Lord

rehearseth his account thrice in one chapter, Mark ix. 44, 46, 48. And his servant Jude, following the steps of his Divine Master, on the same subject, describes the state, both of the fallen angels, and condemned men, " which are reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness unto the judgment of the great day; as suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," Jude 6, 7. But here again, as in the former view, as the first death of the body altered not the inherence of sin, so neither doth the second death of soul and body in misery, destroy the inherency of sin. Though suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, no fire annihilates the being of sin. No punishment expiates the guilt of sin. Both fallen angels and fallen men retain the inherency of sin, amidst all their sufferings; for nothing in themselves can make retribution, or satisfy the justice of God. Here, therefore, is another distinguishing property of the mystery of iniquity. As durable as the sinner is himself, such is his sin; for both are commensurate: himself indeed is sin. And what a mystery then is iniquity?

I am well aware that there are some who believe not these awful relations of the eternity of punishment to the ungodly, and the everlasting duration of sin among those who go out of life as they entered it, unregenerate, unrenewed, unrecovered from the Adam-fall transgression. I have not now to learn that they are questioned by persons of light and vain minds. But they are too solemnly assured in the divine records to admit a doubt, and too alarming in their tremendous consequences to be made the subject of a peradventure. True, indeed, we are not permitted to look beyond the horizon of the present time-state, and behold the vast abyss of woe, where these things are realized, nor hear the shrieks of the miserable, but we have what is tantamount, in numberless scriptures, in proof, that under the heaviest judgments, " men continue to blaspheme the name of God, because of their pains; and repent

not of their deeds," Rev. xvi. 9, 10. And in respect to the unchangeable nature of sin, as sin is in itself, we have too many and too palpable testimonies, in the present state of things, to doubt the unalterable continuance of it in another. So fixed and determined is that sentence, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still," Rev. xxii. 11. When for the wickedness of man, "which was great in the earth," the Lord decreed to destroy man with the earth, and by a deluge "to consume all flesh wherein was the breath of life;" we read, that "all that was in the dry land died," Gen. vii. throughout. But though the waters swept away in one common destruction, all the then generations of men, (excepting the few preserved in the ark) yet sin remained. The waters destroyed the sinner, but not sin. Such was then, as it is now, the mystery of iniquity, that it remained the same. Man was no more; the earth was drained, when the waters had executed their errand; but sin was not dried up. For no sooner did Noah and his family come forth from the ark, than we read of the effects of sin, Gen. ix. 21. And as the Lord peopled the new world with inhabitants, the fruits, both of original and actual transgression, appeared in all mankind, as had before been in the old. The tower of Babel arose in confirmation; and thousands of a like nature have been erected as monuments of the same. Every age hath borne upon it the inscription, "The mystery of iniquity!"

But the mysteriousness in which this subject is involved, brancheth out into such a diversity of illustrations, that like the arteries and blood-vessels of the human frame, it is impossible to trace them through their ramifications, or to follow either of them to the extreme point. Laying this down, however, as the one sure, fixed, and never to be contradicted principle, namely, that by original sin, the root of iniquity is alike

in every son and daughter of Adam, it will undeniably follow, that by nature there is an inclination alike in all to the commission of sin; and if it doth not break out alike in all, this must be the result of other causes, and not from the smallest difference in the original stamina, which hath but one and the same root in all. Here is another volume, and a very large one indeed it forms, of "the mystery of iniquity." To enter into a scriptural apprehension of it, we must first take into view what the divine record hath stated on the subject of our whole nature, universally considered, by the Adam-fall transgression. The terms given to the apostacy of our ruined state, are uniformly through all the scripture, expressed of all the race by one and the same. It is called, "the old man;" "the body of sin," Rom. vi. 6. The "sin that dwelleth in us;" that "worketh in us all manner of concupiscence," Rom. vii. 8, 20. And so universal is the taint in every individual, that speaking but of one member, James saith, "the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity," James iii. 6. And if so, what a mass must be the whole? Hence it is added, that "the scripture hath concluded all under sin," Gal. iii. 22. All men having alike the same inherency of evil, the root of sin, by the original fall of the first sinner, being equally in all, it becomes no small part of the "mystery of iniquity," that if the same actual transgressions do not appear alike equally in all, this must be founded in other causes than that of any difference in the fallen nature. For it is the whole of man that is corrupt. He is rotten at the core. And as the prophet hath summed up the account, and drawn the portrait, is one finished character, in which every one, when his eyes are enlightened, may discover, as in a glass, his own features; "The whole head (saith the prophet) is sick, and the whole heart is faint; from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no sound-

ness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores," Isa. i. 5, 6.

In respect to the diversified breakings out of sin, there may and necessarily will be found a diversity in actual transgression; but then there is but one and the same cause which gives birth to all. For as in the first sinner's rebellion, Adam sinned not, until he had lost all reverence to the divine command; so in every transgression of his posterity, the same becomes the leading principle; losing a sense of duty, and propelled by the workings of concupiscence, the sinner gives into the temptation, and offends in that sin, be it what it may, "which doth most easily beset him." And this explains in some measure, how it is, and why it is, that while one and the same corrupt fountain from within sends forth its poisonous streams in various directions, all do not run in the same channel, neither do all emit alike equal degrees of evil. The different constitutions of mankind will have a varied tendency; some to one propensity, and some to another; but all originating, while in a state of unrenewed nature, indicate the same source of a fallen condition in the carnal mind, which the scripture universally defines to be "enmity against God," Rom. viii. 7. And here again we trace somewhat in the outlines of "the mystery of iniquity." For that iniquity should rankle alike in every man's mind, one and the same original apostacy, in the first transgressor, conveying the deadly poison to his whole posterity; and yet we find it not unfrequently to be smothered in some, while bursting forth in others, plainly manifests, that it is not the first cause in original sin, but some after effect which acts for a while as a barrier to suppress the act of perpetration. So that the restraints of iniquity, which like pent-up waters prevented from running, make no difference in the real existence and being of indwelling corruption. Many

and various reasons may and do operate to restrain sin. The fear of man will sometimes do that to keep back from sinning, where the fear of God hath lost its power. This is proved in those thousand and ten thousand instances where things are done in secret, which the actors would blush to have spoken of in public. But all these are mere restraints, which operate only while a padlock is put on the mind. Suppose it taken off, and then from *original* sin, and the tendency to evil in *actual* transgression, the same is universally alike in all. So that if all the sons and daughters of Adam were placed in the same situation, and all restraints taken off, what one man hath done, all men are alike prone to do, and capable of doing; yea, and would do, for the nature is the same. I stay not to amplify the subject with adverting to the restraints of grace, which the Lord *for* his people, and *in* his people manifests, while they are in an unconscious, unawakened, and unregenerate state. Oh, what a huge volume might be written, if known, in the history of every individual of Christ's mystical body on this one chapter only, Gen. xx. 6. 1 Kings xiii. 4. And Oh, what would the records of the church furnish in this particular, of "the mystery of iniquity?"

I will add but one observation more in relation to "the mystery of iniquity," which universally belongs alike to the whole offspring of Adam, by original indwelling sin in a state of nature; namely, that in proportion as the bulk or substance of any thing, be it what it may, in one solid mass, is greater than when the same is wire-drawn and spread abroad into parts, by so much is the indwelling sin, which is the man himself, greater than all the actual offences which come forth from this forge of corruption. This is so obvious as can scarce need being insisted upon. But our Lord's decision is unanswerable in proof; "That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man; for from within

out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these things come from within, and defile the man," Mark vii. 20—23. It is the heart where all the base metal is in mass; and from this mint comes forth the several greater or lesser coins, current in the kingdom of Satan; so that whether there be or not much circulation, the treasury is the same. The original sin, that (as Paul saith) "worketh in us all manner of concupiscence," Rom. vii. 8. is not less there, nor less working, like fermenting liquor, though not always working over. The mole is still burrowing under ground; whether he casts up his hillocks above the surface or not. So that latent hidden sin is not less sinful, for not being brought forth into action; but, on the contrary, is the source of all. And as it is the heart which the Lord trieth, so the estimate of corruption is there formed. And the Lord, speaking of the sin of Jerusalem, saith, "As a fountain casteth out her waters, so she casteth out her wickedness," Jer. vi. 7.

I tremble at the picture I have drawn. And is this the real state and condition of every man by nature? Yes! Is every man, woman, and child, by original sin in the Adam-fall transgression, thus universally alike guilty before God? Yes! And is there not a single exception? No! What then are those amiable qualities we behold in some, of no estimation to counteract the effects of universal corruption? Amiable qualities, no doubt, are very desirable and attracting; and much it were to be wished they were more general in common life; but all these have respect only to man with man. They may gild over the surface, but can impart no change to the heart. They are like perfumes, which by their fragrancy overpower those offensive and loathsome vapours arising from dead bodies, but make no alteration in the corpse itself. And is the

writer and the reader of this little tract both equally in the same debased, degraded, and corrupt state of nature by the fall? What a subject is "the mystery of iniquity!"

But hitherto, our observations have been confined to the consideration of this mystery, in reference to man's original condition by the fall, and while remaining in a state of unregeneracy before God. If we prosecute the subject in relation to the Lord's people, after that sovereign act of grace hath taken place, the mystery of iniquity unfolds itself in greater colouring, and as the Lord takes us by the hand, to lead us as he did the prophet, through the chambers of imagery of our own hearts, every new discovery hath a voice like the one to him; "Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these!" Ezekiel viii. throughout.

By the marvellous work of regeneration, or the new birth, the child of God is spiritually enlightened to discern things spiritually. He is awakened to the knowledge of himself, and of his own lost and ruined nature by the fall; and being convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, he is led by divine teaching, and by a divine power, to the loathing of himself, and into a longing desire for the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. "The mystery of iniquity," now begins to make a manifestation of itself in his own heart; and, like Paul, he finds a conflict which he never felt before, that he hath a double nature acting in direct opposition to each other, and that "when he would do good, evil is present with him," Rom. vii. 21. To give a statement of the soul exercises the Lord's people sustain, and especially in the first stages of the renewed life, beggars all description. Who, indeed, but God himself can say, what dire tossings arise from within, in "the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh?" But what

alarms the child of God most sensibly is, that the mystery of iniquity so encircles him, that in the estimation of himself he sees so much of evil mingling up with all he saith or doth, that he considers his case more hopeless than before he knew any thing of the plague of his own heart, and as it is said in the book of Job, "His soul draweth nigh unto the grave, and his life unto the destroyers," Job xxxiii. 22.

But the matter doth not stop here. The mystery of iniquity working on the fleshly mind, aided by the temptations of Satan, everlastingly prompting to the belief, that salvation consists in certain attainments of holiness in a man's own heart, in which the man himself is the chief promoter; such apprehensions leading from Christ instead of looking wholly to Christ, tend to keep the soul in continual bondage; and until Christ is made known and revealed in the heart "the hope of glory," there can be no rest nor comfort, notwithstanding by the new birth the spiritual faculties are brought forth into spiritual life. It would far exceed the limits of this little work, even in a single instance of the history of one of the Lord's people, to develope "the mystery of iniquity" in the unceasing warfare of flesh and spirit; much more to give only a general statement of what passeth and repasseth in the church at large, of the long and various exercises carried on through life. But thus much may be said of all, namely, that the child of God doth not, yea, cannot, arrive to any sure and solid comfort, until he hath learnt so much of his own nothingness and Christ's all-sufficiency, as to see and know, from divine teaching, that "Christ is all and in all." When the Lord hath brought him wholly to rest on this Rock of Ages, he enjoys the blessedness of that gracious promise, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee," Isa. xxvi. 3.

But what a mystery of mysteries in the deceitfulness of iniquity, is that which prompts any one, whom the Lord hath made acquainted with the plague of his own heart, to be ever after looking off Christ, to look at self in any supposed attainments of his own in a way of salvation? Our glorious Lord hath defined the everlasting distinction, between grace and nature, when stating the mighty work of the new birth, as limited to the Spirit; "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," John iii. 6. A clear and (one might have thought a) decisive conclusion that no alteration whatever is wrought on the body. Flesh it still is, and flesh it remains through life, until it falls into the dust, from whence the Lord Jesus will himself raise it to be like himself at the last day, Phil. iii. 21. But till then, it is in a state of warfare with the renewed spirit, more or less in the daily exercises of life. All holy men of old knew this and confessed it. Job's experience after the Lord's revelation was full of self-abhorrence, Job xlii. 6. Isaiah, as "a man of unclean lips," Isa. vi. 5. Daniel, "his comeliness turned into corruption," Dan. x. 8. Peter, a "sinful man," Luke v. 8. And Paul, that he was "carnal sold under sin," and his confession delivered more than twenty years after he knew the Lord, Rom. vii. 14. What were those men's views of progressive sanctification?

Precious, precious Lord Jesus! the mystery of iniquity doth indeed work, but thou hast made "reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness." Thou hast done as thou didst promise, concerning thy people in that gracious declaration, "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day," Zech. iii. 9. Oh! for the spiritual apprehension personally to every one of thy mystical members to realize, as the prophet did, the believing enjoyment of it; and say as to him while applying the live coal from off the altar

of thy divine nature, "Lo! this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged," Isa. vi. 6, 7.

I cannot conclude this little tract without observing, that that statement the Holy Ghost hath given by Paul, 2 Thess. ii. 8. &c., is a scripture of such vast importance as cannot be too warmly cherished, nor too often brought into daily exercise of faith, by all the Lord's people, when the Lord Jesus "comes to be glorified in his saints;" this scripture declares that the man of sin shall be revealed; and the Lord shall consume him with the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming. Hence, the whole church will then know who this man of sin is; for he is to be revealed, and then consumed. Let the reader recollect the miracles of Christ, which he wrought in the night of his apprehension. See John xviii. 1—6. Psalm xxvii. 1, 2. Here was a resemblance through faith to what will be then. Various have been the conjectures of various writers concerning this "man of sin." The great mass of commentators have supposed it to mean the pope. I differ wholly from them. Pope, prelate, or potentate, are all too insignificant to be thus personally pointed at. Besides, who was the man of sin before either of those characters had being. The man of sin hath been from the fall. But our comfort is at the coming of Christ we shall know, and we shall behold him destroyed, when "the mystery of God shall be finished," Rev. x. 7. and when the Lord Jesus "will gather out of his kingdom all things that offend," Matt. xiii. 41. Amen.

## XX.

### THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS.

And what is the mystery of godliness? Nay, we might better invert the question, by way of giving a more full answer to it, and ask, what is there in godliness that is not mysterious? We are surrounded with mystery on every side. Man is a mystery to himself. Every thing we meet with in this twilight of our being, appears mysterious. "We speak (said Paul) the wisdom of God in a mystery," 1 Cor. ii. 7. We not only speak of the mystery itself, but we speak it in a mystery; for it is, and ever must remain, to mere natural men a mystery: and none but spiritually enlightened men, taught of God, can apprehend it, 1 Cor. ii. 14. The very first volume in the revelation of God in his trinity of persons, towards the church, begins with "God manifest in the flesh." And when the subject which was then proclaimed by the visible Jehovah in our nature is traced back, and beheld as connected with the everlasting counsels of the Holy Three in One from all eternity, the mind of the regenerated child of God is overwhelmed and lost in the contemplation, and constrained to exclaim, "great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints," Rev. xv. 3.

It is of all employments the most blessed to trace the origin of the church in her glorious head from all eternity. To behold our nature in the person of him, who from everlasting stood up her Almighty representative. Here was, and is, grace not as given to us in our fallen estate; but to him, in the purity of our nature, in him "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth," 1 Peter ii. 22. Hence, though we say, and are blessedly taught, both by scripture and

the experience of our own lives to say, "where sin abounded grace did much more abound," Rom. v. 20. yet in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ "grace was poured into his lips," in the union of his human nature with the divine, on his own personal account, and for his own personal holiness, and his own personal glory: and which the Lord Jesus refers to when speaking of that "glory which he had with the Father before the world was," John xvii. 5. This was purely his own: a glory and a dignity wholly in himself. Not in the essence of his nature and Godhead only, for as one in the being of Jehovah, he was incapable of receiving the gift of any thing; but it was as "the head of his body, the church, the fulness of him that filleth all in all," Eph. i. 22, 23. It is most blessed, thus on scripture ground, and when spiritually taught, to trace our high original standing in our glorious head before the present time-state of the church; and to contemplate him in his own personal excellency, who before the world had this glory, and will have it when all worlds are destroyed: the beholding of which will constitute our heaven of happiness, holiness, and glory; and is expressed by one of the apostles in this comprehensive language, "for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 2.

But we must not stop here. The mystery of godliness as in our Christ, our head, in that holy portion of our nature taken into union with the Godhead, which possessed, and doth possess, a glory purely his own, to which none of his mystical members can attain, next is made known, when in the eternal world, and before the time-state of the church, as deriving from him a glory, which, though far less than the former, still forms a part in the divine subject, and is among "the mystery of godliness." True, indeed, the personal glory of Christ is a glory, not then manifested, but privately enjoyed among the persons in the Godhead; yet at the same time (if any period in eternity can be called

by that name) he saith himself, that when "the Lord possessed him in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old, when there was no depths, no fountain abounding with water; then he was by him as one brought up with him, and was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth;" (and what could this habitable part be, but our nature, which he would in the fulness of time tabernacle in?) "and his delights were then with the sons of men," Prov. viii. 22—31. Here then is open to our meditation, another immense volume in "the mystery of godliness." Jehovah in his trinity of persons, to whom nothing of blessedness can be added, and from whom nothing can be taken away, here speaks of the pleasure and delight he had then in his church; and although his own personal enjoyment with the persons in the Godhead which he had before the world, stands pre-eminently esteemed in his sight; yet the Lord expressed his pleasure that his church might know it and behold it. "Father! I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me," John xvii. 24.

Neither is this all of what the sacred scriptures teach concerning "the mystery of godliness," in relation to the glorious head of the church, before all time; for grace is said to have been given to the church in him before the world began. Prior to the church's connection with Adam, the first man of the earth, the church had being, and well being in the Lord from heaven. For thus we read, that the church was "blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, being chosen in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love," Eph. i. 3, 4. Here is a wonderful volume to be read over in eternity, as well as in part during our time-state upon earth, in "the mystery of godliness." For here we are taught

how it is, and why it is that in our ruined and undone state in Adam, the church is still upheld from her relationship to Christ, and her grace-union in Christ; so that neither sin nor Satan can deprive her of her holiness in Christ. For this holiness is not a creature holiness, neither is it in the power of creatures, whether men or devils, to take it away. It is out of the reach of both. It is not in the church's own possession, consequently she cannot lose it: but the church being formed for an higher end than the powers of nature could possibly attain, "grace is given to her in Christ Jesus before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9. Such are among the "mysteries of godliness." And hence is proved that the divine glory hath an infinitely higher concern in those eternal transactions than our holiness or happiness. The first ultimate and supreme end, is the divine glory. And hence such provision is made for the accomplishment in the person of our most glorious Christ, and our relationship to him, as nothing of creature holiness can add to, or creature sinfulness take from. Hence, one of the apostles blessedly expresses it. "To them that are sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called," Jude 1.

And when we leave the meditation of the subject in eternity to come down to the time-state of the church upon earth, the "mystery of godliness" amplifies to our view in every direction, and overwhelms the mind in the boundless contemplation. The church as well as mankind, had a nature being in Adam, and as such was included in all that followed that connection. But here "the mystery of godliness" opened at once in every thing relating to the church. Had it been possible for a child of God to have been present and beheld the Lord God, as it is said Gen. ii. 7. "forming man of the dust of the ground, and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, and man becoming a living soul;" what a "mystery of godliness," that the Lord

God should have taken this or that clod of dust for the formation of man, while taking this or that of the same earth, for the formation of beast. That the Lord God should have taken this or that clod of dust, into which he would breathe the breath of life; while the clod next to it, and the thousands of clods around it, were left inanimated, and never to be animated to all eternity! That such and such portions of the same earth were to be called into being, and originally and eternally designed as vessels of glory, for the inhabitation of Jehovah; while the rest continued, as predestinated to be continued, in their original nothingness! Are not these things to be classed among "the mysteries of godliness?"

And if we were to prosecute the subject through the whole history of the church, from the beginning of time to the present hour, and from hence to the close of all things, what a world of wonders might every child of God's own private life furnish in "the mysteries of godliness!" Wherefore that certain persons of the Lord's people were born at one time of the world and not at another? Wherefore the bounds of their habitation should be fixed at one place, rather than another; from what parents in nature they should spring; and from when and where be called by sovereign grace? How their stations should be distinguished in humble poverty for the most part; and wherefore not many among the wise or the mighty, or the noble of the earth, should be in the number? Why sorrow, and sackcloth, and wretchedness, and misery, should mark the characters of multitudes of the Lord's chosen ones; while those who know not the Lord should glide through life in the enjoyment of the "precious things brought forth by the sun, and the precious things put forth by the moon?" Such, and numberless other circumstances arise to the contemplation in every direc-

tion we may take of the subject ; all which form a part in " the mystery of godliness."

But we get yet more enveloped in the difficulties of unravelling the mysteries of the kingdom, when from the outer courts of nature we are led by the hand into the inner court of grace. We know from the divine statement of holy scripture that all the members of Christ's mystical body are alike members of that body, and are all one in Christ. For though some are great, some small, some of less abilities, and some of more distinguished attainments, yet all equally near and dear to the Lord. They are all alike the gift of the Father to the Son ; all equally united to the Son their spiritual head ; all redeemed with one and the same common salvation ; and all equally the objects and the subjects of the love of God the Holy Ghost : yet, what adversity in their first views, their further progress, their exercises in spiritual pursuits, their state and enjoyment in the Lord. The Lord hath said, " this people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise," Isa. xliii. 21. But what a marvellous process doth the Lord sometimes, and not unfrequently, take in the accomplishment of his sovereign will ; to what a length are multitudes of them permitted to run, while in the unrecovered state of their unregeneracy ! Who shall explain the cause of the divine ordination, wherefore some are early called to the knowledge of the Lord, whilst others stand idle, and worse than idle, in the market-place, " to the eleventh hour in the day ?" Who shall unfold the marvellous history of those, who like the dying thief on the cross, sin with an high hand until death is at the door, while others are kept from their youth in a moral state as to outward appearances ; and both, as the event afterwards hath proved, alike " heirs of the kingdom ?" What part of scripture is it that shews

the cause of one class of the Lord's people living in a state of obedience for the most part after being called; whilst another is perpetually given to backsliding? Is not every one that reads the history of these things, compelled to say with the apostle, "without controversy great is the mystery of godliness?"

And perhaps as great a paradox as any of these statements in the subject of mystery, that so much grace should be given to preserve alive the incorruptible seed, amidst the vast growth of weeds which threaten to choke it every moment; and in the same ground of nature and grace, in which as the apostle saith, "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh," Gal. v. 7. That both should be everlastingly striving for the mastery, and yet neither totally subdued. The corruptions of the body, such as like an overwhelming tide, continually appearing to swallow up all obstructions; grace yet surviving the candle not blown out, amidst the most violent winds of the heath; the ship not foundered, though seemingly blown by the wind and raging of the sea, without any thing more in itself than a cable of straw to withstand! Here is another proof of "the mystery of godliness."

I would here call upon the reader to pause with me, and before we prosecute the subject further, gather up a very blessed instruction (for it is too interesting to be lost) from the contemplation of "the mystery of godliness," in the preservation of the Lord's people, amidst all the rubbish of their fallen nature. Nothing tends, under sovereign grace, to animate the regenerated child of God more, amidst the humblings of conscious sin, than the liftings up which he at the same time is continually receiving from the Lord. These divine succours are indeed not unfrequently given, unnoticed and unexpected, as supplies to a besieged city. They come at times so sweet and seasonable, that they renovate

the mind with fresh vigour, like the little army of Gideon, which, though "faint, was yet pursuing," Judges viii. 4. Moreover, they prompt the mind to trace the mercy from its source, and to consider that among the mysteries of godliness, the first quickenings from death to life, to the sinner's view, are as marvellous as any. For if the soul found life from the dead then, what can arise to prevent the same mercy amidst dying circumstances now? It could be nothing but grace at the first; and the top-stone will be brought forth with shoutings, crying, "grace, grace unto it!"

And what can tend to endear Christ to the child of God with equal earnestness of affection, as the conscious sense of our daily need of him? As long as the gracious promise of the Lord is felt in the soul, which he gave the apostle, while sinking under his "thorn in the flesh," when Jesus said, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness;" every child of God, like Paul, will say as he did, "Most gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me," 2 Cor. xii. 9.

But we must drop the consideration of what refers to the church, and the personal exercises of the Lord's people, on the subject of the great mystery of godliness, to look at the first original predisposing cause of all, in the sovereign wisdom of Jehovah by this ordination, in his trinity of persons. All that relates to the church is of minor consideration to this. Very blessed indeed it is, that in those gracious designs of Jehovah, the church's interest is included; but the first and highest object is the divine glory, and made known in this way, to the praise of the glory of Jehovah's grace, in his trinity of persons, "wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved," Eph. i. 6.

And if we confine our present view of it to that one volume, the apostle referred to, "God manifest in the

flesh;" (for the limits of a tract will only enable us to give the head of it like the contents in the index of a book) we shall have enough to dwell upon, and to rejoice in to all eternity, God and man in one person! One of the divine persons in the Godhead taking into union with himself an holy portion of our nature, to redeem that nature from the ruins of the fall, and to raise up to himself, "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but to be holy and without blemish," Eph. i. 6.

I have often thought, when upon the apostacy of our first parents, the news broke out in Paradise, that Jehovah would recover his fallen people by a way so marvellous as, that the "seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head," Gen. iii. 15. what apprehension the angels looking on could have had of the mystery! Had they studied ten thousand times ten thousand years the subject, never could such a thought have entered their mind untaught of God, by what process the wonderful event would be accomplished. Every chapter in this bible of revelation, would have been alike full of perplexity. Let me mention a few only. That in one of the sacred persons of the Godhead, God would become man, and yet be God; "Emmanuel, God with us." That in this blessed compound he would fulfil all righteousness, and make full obedience and restitution to his own law which man had broken. That he, "whose goings forth had been from of old, from everlasting," should in a time-state be "made flesh and dwell among us." That he who had neither "beginning of days nor end of life," should be made a child of years; and he who was "without father, without mother," should be "born of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons!" Who less than God himself could have planned such things? Who less than God himself could have exe-

cuted them? And what intellect of men or angels, untaught of God, could have formed the smallest conception of them?

But the mystery doth not rest here. In this stupendous work of redemption, he that undertook to deliver his church "from the curse of the law," must himself be made a curse to accomplish it. He who himself was more holy than the heavens, must be made "sin for his people, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him." That he who "created all things," and was, and is "the Lord of life and glory," must die "the just for the unjust to bring us to God." He from whom none could take his life, should himself lay it down, and by his death overcome death; and by his raising himself to life again, become "the resurrection and life" to his whole body the church! All these, and numberless other things relating to the person of Emmanuel, are contained in what the apostle calls, the "great mystery of godliness."

I forbear to enlarge. And I must not add to what hath been proposed in these outlines, of "the great mystery of godliness." But otherwise the whole tenor of scripture is to the same amount. The apostle hath formed a rich cluster in the verse from whence the first volume is gathered. For when he said, "and without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness," he immediately proceeds to enumerate more; God who was manifest in the flesh, "was justified in the Spirit; seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." Every description here given is among the wonders of mystery; and apparently the least of them, namely, "believed on in the world," carries with it as evident a proof of divine power as the incarnation of Christ: since nothing short of supernatural grace can excite belief in the sinner's heart, nor beget faith to believe "the record God hath given of his Son."

I must not conclude, however, until that I have first called upon the reader to contemplate with me, those two blessed views of our most glorious Christ, which this great mystery of godliness teacheth the church, to live in the enjoyment of by faith from day to day until they come to be realized in open vision in the great day of the Lord.

The first is the consummation of this great mystery, "God manifest in the flesh," when from this union of one of the persons of the Godhead with our nature, he will raise up the dust of his saints to the triumphs of our God, "he will change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself," Phil. iii. 21.

And the second is the marvellous manifestation of his almighty power, "when the man of sin shall be revealed; and whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming," 2 Thess. ii. 3, 8. But these sovereign acts are his, and belong to him as his own personal glory, "who was crucified in weakness." It is his special right and his own rightful property to do both. For as at the entrance of sin into the world, death came by sin; Jesus by his own sovereign power subdued both sin and death; and having by his own death destroyed him that hath the power of death, by his resurrection also he became the "first fruits of them that slept." At this great day of our God in the consummation of all things, these mighty acts will prove his sovereignty and Godhead. "The man of sin shall be revealed." Nor none but Jesus knows what sin is, from whence it came, and whence its universal dominion. That it reigns over all men, for that all have sinned, is a truth scripture hath most decidedly shewn. But what it is, the millions that have felt its deadly operations upon

earth, yea, the miserable in eternity under the second death know not, while reeking with its malignity.

It is called in this scripture "the man of sin." But though sin reigned in Adam, the first man, yet it is not said with peculiar reference to him, that "he is the man of sin," though himself a sinner. Neither can it mean Adam, for in the great day of Christ it is said that the man of sin shall be revealed, whereas the word of God hath made revelation of Adam as a sinner from the fall. Neither can it refer to Satan; for he is not a man but a spirit. And though it hath been a very general custom for many generations to limit the application of "the man of sin" to one identical character, yet if this scripture meant such, the revealing this man of sin would not form, as is here stated, the distinguishing triumphs of our Christ at that day, for in this sense he would have been already revealed. And it is too trifling to suppose that this, or any other individual, among the apostate race of men, would be singled out to be consumed by the brightness of Christ's coming; when it is said of all unreclaimed sinners, "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God."

While I presume not therefore to define the full apprehension of "the man of sin" here spoken of, and then to be revealed, and then consumed by the Spirit of Christ's mouth, and destroyed by the brightness of his coming; I am inclined to believe, that it is reserved for the triumphs of our most glorious Christ in that day, to unfold to his whole church before a congregated world, who, and what this man of sin is, and whence the continuance of his empire, from the fall of man to the consummation of the victory of Christ; not one individual man, but sin itself, the very body of sin, the substantial cause of all our sorrows during the whole of this our fallen state. This, which hath called

forth the anxious inquiry of the church of God in all ages to discover, will then be clearly known. And Jesus will have the rightful claim to make the revelation of it himself.

The Lord grant that suited grace to the choice ones of his flock, that in the contemplation of such sublime subjects as "the mystery of iniquity, and the mystery of godliness," they may be able "to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that they may be filled with all the fulness of God!"

## XXI.

BREAD SELLING TO THE POOR AT HALF PRICE; A SWEET MEMORIAL OF THE BREAD OF LIFE; WHICH IS GIVEN TO THE POOR OF THE LORD'S PEOPLE, WITHOUT MONEY AND WITHOUT PRICE.

What gave birth to this little tract was this: in order to soften in a parochial way the pressure of the times, which hath borne hard upon the poor in the present winter, both from the difficulty of procuring employment, and the high price of provisions, the parish of Charles, in Plymouth, by voluntary contributions, and collection every Lord's day morning in the church, adopted the plan of selling a thousand sixpenny loaves of the best quality for threepence to each person. And it is pleasing to observe with what delight the poor to whom this little bounty was offered, received the well-meant favour. The cheerfulness of their looks, and the promptness with which they proffered their few pence from their scanty pockets, loudly bespoke the grateful sense they entertained of the kindness shewn them.

Let the world say what it will, certainly there is a somewhat in the mind of man, and wrapt up in his very nature, which loves to be noticed. A kind word, a soft answer (which, as Solomon saith, "turneth away wrath") will go a great way to win the affections of the poor. Yea, the cup of cold water, when a man hath nothing warmer to give, will gain "the blessing of him that is ready to perish." And it doth form a luxury of the purest kind, (when unmixed with pride and self-righteousness) to be instrumental to the poor man's comfort. One which could not be mistaken hath left it upon record, (and in his own glorious example proved it upon the purest principles) that he which helps another is the most favoured himself. He said it, and that is

enough to stamp its certainty :—" it is more blessed to give than to receive," Acts xx. 35. And is it so, thou dearest Lord! in all thy mercies to thy people? Is Jesus more blessed when he gives, than his people in receiving? Is that immense grace of redemption productive of more glory to our God and Saviour, than happiness (immense as that happiness is) to all thy redeemed? Oh, what encouragement ought every poor sensible sinner to find in it to come unto Jesus!

It was at one of these public sales in our church yard, for bread at this reduced price, when the pressure of the people was so great they almost trod one upon another, that a thought struck me, how blessed would it be to behold such an eagerness in the people of the Lord for the bread of life! Indeed, indeed, it brought to my recollection the delightful account given of Thee, thou glorious head of thy church, when in the days of thy flesh "the people pressed upon thee to hear the word of God!" And well might they hang upon thee, into whose "lips grace was poured without measure," in order to catch "the words which proceeded out of my mouth!" Luke v. 1.

Surely, I said, (as I looked on the multitude, and ruminated on the subject) it would be a lovely sight could we see our poor, to whom Jesus saith the gospel is preached, as earnest for the bread which endureth to everlasting life, as these hungry ones are for the bread which perisheth with the using. Are these people aware that Christ, the bread of life, is the free gift of God? Do they know the vast necessity of spiritually feeding on Christ? And have they heard what Jesus himself hath said, "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," John vi. 53.

What a blessed occasion, I said, would it be to speak to them on the subject? and while their looks testify so much cheerfulness at the receipt of this little boon

of the earth, to call their attention to that free gift of God in Jesus, "the living bread which came down from heaven, of whom whosoever eateth shall live for ever," John vi. 51.

But the clamour at those sales, from the earnestness of the multitude, totally precluded the hope of being heard on the subject, however interesting. I therefore determined, under the Lord's grace, to adopt this plan of addressing them, and with every loaf give a copy of this tract; and send it forth, as I have now done, under the hope of the Lord's blessing.

In the discourse I have endeavoured to raise from it, I still consider myself as having those poor ones of the Lord's family before me. I am in idea still at the sale; and while each one is so busy in stepping forward for the cheap purchase of his loaf, I put my little tract into his hand, to tell him of the bread of life, and to be had "without money and without price."

And I begin my subject at the same point as the Lord Jesus began his, when he had miraculously fed the bodies of "five thousand with five loaves and two fishes." The Lord called off their attention from the effect to the cause. They had all along considered the feeding of their fathers in the wilderness to have been by Moses. Jesus tells them that it was not Moses which gave them that bread from heaven: for Moses knew not how the Lord would supply the camp, and so constantly victual the people from day to day. Moses neither sought it, nor prayed for it, or had the least hand in providing it. "Verily, I say unto you, (said Jesus) Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world," John vi. 32, 33. Hence we learn, that the manna of the wilderness was a type of Christ; and was intended to teach the church, that as the manna fed the body,

so Christ was the life of the soul; and as the one ministered to the present subsistence of life, so the other to life eternal. And hence under a conviction of the vast superiority of the heavenly bread to that of the earthly, they cried out, "Lord, evermore give us this bread!"

Secondly. This will appear yet more striking, if we consider the absolute necessity of this bread for the preservation of spiritual life. You need no arguments from any one to point out to you the necessity of the daily bread of the body. Your coming here for the express purpose of purchasing it for half price for yourselves and your little ones, plainly testify the sense you have of the need of it. But if you felt an equal hungering in your soul for the bread that endureth to everlasting life, how much more eager would you be that your soul should not go in leanness and want from day to day, without supplies from Christ? And do you not know, that as common bread is the staff of life to the body, so Christ, the spiritual bread, is the life of the soul? Yea, the soul hath more need of Christ, than the body hath for the bread which perisheth. Put the case to the very worst which can happen. Suppose there was a famine of common bread; and suppose, in consequence thereof, the body was to languish and die: yet this death of the body is but a death a little hastened, and which without it must soon have taken place. But if the soul die for want of Christ, it will perish for ever: and although that death is not a privation of existence, for it must live for ever, yet it only lives to be miserable, and that to all eternity. Oh, the vast awfulness of living and dying without Christ, the bread of life!

Thirdly. It is with you a matter of great encouragement to come here and purchase bread at half price; so that we see you come with cheerfulness, and find freedom from the good will with which we sell it to you.

But, my poor brother, let me tell you, that if you did but know the Lord, and his love towards his poor, you would come to him with a much greater freedom for the bread of life; for he gives it "without money and without price." Christ, the bread of life, is the free gift of God. And it is impossible to say which delights most in making his people for ever blessed in this gift; the Father in giving his dear Son, or Jesus in giving himself to his people. Depend upon it, it is our ignorance of God and of our want of Jesus, which is the cause of keeping back any poor sinner from coming to receive him. It may be said now, as Jesus himself said to the woman of Samaria, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water," John x. My poor brother! be assured it is the same ignorance which keeps back from Jesus in the present hour. Did we but know Christ as God's free gift, wholly free, wholly unmerited, wholly unlooked for and unthought of, every poor sinner would flee to him, under this warrant of God, and in coming would find the blessedness of his gracious assurance when he saith, "all that the Father giveth me shall come unto me; and him that cometh I will in no wise cast out," John vi. 37.

When the sons of Jacob, under famishing circumstances, went down into Egypt to buy corn, little did they at first know that the lord of the country, with whom they came to trade, was their own brother: and while they continued in this ignorance, they were fearful to receive the least portion of food without paying for it. But when they discovered in the person of the governor their long lost brother, we hear no more of buying. Gladly they took all that he gave them, and found cause to bless God for such mercies. And when a poor hungry sinner, conscious of being famished by reason of sin, comes to the Lord Jesus for the bread of

life, and when he discovers in Jesus, through divine teaching, that he is both the Father's gift, and his own brother born for adversity, gladly he receives the whole as a free gift of God, in the full mercy and salvation of Jesus Christ.

Fourthly. Your purchase of the bread of life once done, is done for ever. The child of God hungers no more after the unsatisfying things of this world, but lives a life of faith on the Son of God. And in Jesus he finds a fulness of food, and every seasonable and needful mercy. For Christ is both the bread of life, and the water of life; the garment of salvation, and the robe of righteousness. And in him he finds all he needs every day, and all the day; for Jesus becomes "an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," Isaiah xxxii. 2.

The utmost our narrow plan can do in selling bread to the poor at half price, is to provide you for the moment only; and when you have consumed this you will hunger again, and will need more. But if Jesus, the living bread, give you of himself and his fulness to live upon, in him you will find enough to live upon to all eternity. Hear his precious words! Jesus saith, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst," John vi. 35.

When the prophet Elijah, in a time of dearth, visited the poor widow reduced to a small portion of oil and an handful of meal, he taught her to eye Christ in her provision, scanty as it was; and the oil in the cruse wasted not, neither did the meal fail; for it is said, that according to the word of the Lord, she, and he, and all her house, did eat many days. And what are all brooks drying, and cisterns wasting, when the soul hath

found Christ a fountain to live upon, whose "streams make glad the city of God," 1 Kings xvii. 14, 15.

Fifthly. The infinite fulness of Christ is such as to supply all his people, so that not one can go empty away; but if they were multiplied by millions, the vessels of his people's hearts would fail before that the fountain of Jesus's fulness could be the least diminished.

It hath been, as you well know, a matter of deep regret with us, that during the time we have been selling you bread at half price, from the scantiness of our means, and the greatness of your wants, often have we been obliged to shut up our shop while numbers of you have been unsupplied. But this can never take place, in a single instance, with one of the hungry ones of the Lord's people, who come to Jesus for the bread of life. He is so full that nothing can exhaust; so suited to all cases as nothing can drain; and so gracious, that he saith himself he will send none empty away, but "the poor and the needy shall give praise to his name." Oh, when I think what multitudes the Lord is daily, hourly feeding, my very soul is ready to leap within me at the thought! And what endears it yet more is, that the more he gives out, the more he hath to give; for the fulness in himself is endless: and it is the scantiness of our hearts, and not his bounty, that is restrained. Like the Shunamite's vessel, the oil of his grace stays not, until there is not another vessel in the house to receive of it. The more he gives out, the larger he widens the souls of his people to receive; and while the Lord gives them the power to take, the Lord gives his fulness to supply, and "of his fulness do we all receive, and grace for grace."

Sixthly. The sale of the bread of life differs, in various instances, from this sale of the bread that perisheth

with using. Here there is a barter made; you give your money, though not equal to what you receive in point of value: but there the buyer is the only receiver. In the kindness shewn you in our bread shops, the deserving poor, as they are called, the bounties of the rich are principally intended to. But with Jesus his grace is manifested to the undeserving, and to the most miserable. At the court of heaven the merit of the creature finds no plea. Nay, his very unworthiness, and the deep sense of it, forms the best recommendation. For if the Lord waited to be gracious until he found objects meriting his favour, not a portion of the bread of life would ever be dispensed again. Let every poor sensible sinner have this always in remembrance. Your success at the mercy-seat depends not upon your deservings, but the Lord's free sovereign grace towards you. Jesus hath an eye not to what sinners deserve, but how his grace shall best be magnified in their salvation. His grace flows from himself, and for his own glory. And, therefore, how the Lord can make the riches of his grace to shine most, to this great end, becomes the standard in dispensing his gifts to his poor. So sung Mary when she proved it in her own person: "he filleth the hungry with good things: the rich he sendeth empty away."

Lastly—to mention no more. The bread of life to which the poor in spirit sit down, under the favour of heaven, gives a sanctified use of all other mercies. Jesus then is in all to sweeten all, and sanctify all. For whether the soul be poor or rich, in this world's good, the grace of Christ blesseth both the basket and the store in laying down and rising up. Let the outward circumstances be what they may, Christ being in all sweetly leavens all. While the child of God can say, "the Lord is my portion;" he can say also, "thou maintainest my lot," Psalm xvi. 5. And if the poor of our people cannot speak much of the precious things brought

forth by the sun, nor of the precious things put forth by the moon, yet while they know "the goodwill of him that dwelt in the bush," communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, makes a feast-day every day. They have a Benjamin's portion to live upon in time and to all eternity. Well might the scriptures observe, that "the blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it," Prov. x. 22.

And now what say our poor purchasers of our bread to these things? You who are come to our cheap shop, to supply yourselves and little ones with a small portion of the bread that perisheth, is not the bread of life more cheap, more necessary, more free, more full, more generous, more blessed? Can any market equal the market of free grace? Can any bread equal the bread of life?

Here you pay somewhat, though it be but half for what you buy. To Jesus you are expected to bring nothing. For he who sells his bread of life, sells it "without money and without price." Indeed, indeed, it is already bought, and dearly bought, and paid for. It cost an immense price, even Christ's blood. But to his people it comes as free as the light of heaven, or as the dew, or the showers, which "tarrieth not for man, neither waiteth for the sons of men." And if you say, how is it known the assurance whereby a poor hungry sinner may receive it? I answer, this becomes an infallible mark: if Christ be in your desire, depend upon it you are first in his. If Jesus be welcome to you, nothing can be more certain, than you are first welcome to him. We are expressly told, that "if we love him, it is because he first loved us," 1 John iv. 19. So that if, under these impressions, we come to Jesus, nothing can prevent our sure success. "Believe, and ye shall receive." Nothing but unbelief can disqualify from receiving this free bounty of our God. Do not say, like the unbelieving lord in Samaria, the

thing is as impossible as for God to make windows in heaven, least like him, while God is dispensing the bread of life to others, you behold it only with your eyes, and you yourself are trodden to death, as he was in the gate, 2 Kings vii. 19, 20.

Is our sale finished? Are all our loaves gone? And are you all about to return to your houses to sit down with your families together, each with your portion? Then take a word or two more at parting: and may the Lord give his blessing to it and to your food.

And first, let me earnestly recommend to you, that in the use of this bread, as well as all the food of your household, you see that it is "sanctified by the word of God and by prayer." The apostle saith, that "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving." And what a lovely sight it forms to behold the father of every family, whether rich or poor, acting as the priest of his house, (as was the custom of the church of old) and looking up to God in Christ, asking a blessing on himself and little ones, at all their meals. Such holy men began the day, and ended the same in prayer and praise; and blessed God at all their seasons of food. And on the other hand, what an awful view do those houses afford, and their tables set forth, whether they are rich, or whether they are poor, where God is not acknowledged in all their ways? They are prayerless, and like the herds of the stall, they lie down and rise up, go in and out, take of the bounties of God's providences, but never see or acknowledge the hand of the bountiful Giver; never once saying, where is God our Maker, who thus giveth us all things richly to enjoy? Can it be a subject of surprise, that misery and sorrow are so abounding while sin and ingratitude are so abounding? Surely every prayerless family is a Christless family! And where God in Christ is dishonoured and disowned, must not sorrow follow?

Secondly. You who can and do take home with you Christ, the bread of life, as well as the portion of the bread we sell to you, which perisheth with using, pause and ponder as you go over the contemplation of your distinguishing mercies. Surely, in the consciousness of God's love to you, both in providence and grace, you will not cease to cry out with the apostle, "thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

It is true the Lord hath placed you in humble circumstances; and no doubt, you find at times great difficulty to procure your daily bread. But the Lord that placed you where you are, knows better what is suited for your real happiness and his glory, than you do yourself. He will provide. And do not forget that before the Lord placed you in an humble lot in this world, he chose you in Christ, and "before the world began." So that God first chose you in Christ; chose you from the beginning to salvation, and then placed you in this world as might best subserve this first and best of all purposes. Herein God manifested his love. I pray you turn to those scriptures in proof, Eph. i. 3—6. 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14. 2 Tim. i. 9. Titus iii. 3, 7. Hence while Christ is your portion, and is in all his appointments concerning you, this sweetens, softens, and sanctifies all. It was this which made David in a wilderness completely happy. "The Lord is my shepherd, (said he) I shall not want," Psalm xxiii. It was the want of this made Haman at the head of a kingdom completely miserable. "All this (said he) availeth me nothing," Esther v. 13. It is not the outside of things, no, nor the inside of things, in creature comforts, which constitute happiness. Many an aching heart is in a fine house; and many an happy one in a poor room or chamber. And happy must every child of God be while enjoying Christ as his portion. God's promise never fails. "Thy bread shall be given, and thy water sure," Isa. xxxix. 16. And poor living as bread and

water alone is, yet with Christ it is richer fare than all the world without Christ. A little while and the body will need no more: and the poor man who hath Christ for his portion, then enters into the joy of his Lord. What a sweet song the prophet made of this, when he sung to his soul this divine hymn: "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither the fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herds in the stall; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation," Habuk. iii. 17, 18.

Lastly. It will be a very blessed thing if our sale of bread in this parish at a reduced price, while it unites the poor and the rich together in love, the one in giving and the other in receiving what is here offered, should be productive of yet a greater blessing, in awakening any of the Lord's poor ones to the knowledge of, and living upon, Christ, "the bread of life." There is nothing which the great enemy of souls grudges the Lord's people so much as their living upon Christ. Hence, therefore, as this calls forth the devil's greatest malignity, we may be jealous over it, and prize it as among our chiefest blessings. Let every child of God then be always on the look-out for Christ. See that we eye Jesus first in all our mercies. The life of a child of God is a receiving life. And we are said "to receive of his fulness, and grace for grace." For as the bread for the body will not satisfy the wants of the body by merely looking upon it, so Christ, the bread of the soul, will not satisfy the hunger of the soul but by receiving. Hence Jesus himself, speaking of this subject, saith, the Holy Ghost "shall take of mine, and shall shew unto you;" that is, God the Holy Ghost gives the desire after Christ in the soul. He it is which gives a sense of want in the soul for Christ, and a longing after Christ: and he it is which gives

the child of God such a sense of his need and Christ's all-sufficiency, that the soul by faith lives upon Christ, and thus spiritually eats of his flesh, and drinks of his blood, and lives for ever. This is, in scripture language, the Holy Ghost taking of Christ and shewing to the child of God, and causing the child of God to believe in Christ to the saving of the soul. Thus Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, and every day and all the day, the soul lives upon Christ, the bread of life, as the body is sustained and nourished every day, and all the day, with the bread which perisheth in using. And now, my brethren, farewell! I only add a prayer to the God of all grace, that the whole family of the Lord Jesus may find in Jesus, the bread of life to live upon, amid all the famine of sin. And may the Lord, who gives his dear Son for the food of the soul, give every child of his a spiritual appetite to desire and to enjoy the rich feast in Christ, so freely and so fully given of God, that our constant cry may be, "Lord! evermore give us this bread!" Amen.

## XXII.

### THE BREAKFAST.

The morning portion had been more than usually interesting; our whole family seemed to have entered into the spirit of it: and the chapter which was afterwards read, came as with a divine commission to confirm the doctrine. There were none, I believe, in our little circle, but what felt somewhat of its power. So that our approaches to the throne of grace, which followed, and with which we closed our morning devotions, were evidently under the leadings and influences of God the Holy Ghost, and left a sweet savour of the h ame of Jesus upon every heart. Indeed, we all arose from prayer, as those who were conscious that they and been at the mercy-seat, and were come away refreshed.

Methinks, this ought always to be the case. Suppose an angel, that had been with the Lord Jesus this morning were to make a visit, and sit down amongst us; would not every thing in him, and about him, carry with it a sanctity, suited to the blessed society he had just left? Should we not expect his countenance, his words, his every action, yea, his whole deportment, to be altogether heavenly? And if so, ought not a corresponding conduct to mark the features of the faithful upon earth, when at any time they have been in the lively exercise of faith at the heavenly court? If the face of Moses shone, when coming from the mount, in consequence of his communion with the Lord, surely the gracious impressions received at a mercy-seat might be supposed to testify with equal assurance, if not with equal splendour, that "we have been with Jesus," Acts iv. 13.

And so they would indeed, if the influence were the same. We go to the throne of God, when we go there properly, under divine leadings. And the great object for which we are supposed to go, is to see Jesus, and to have fellowship with him. To him we impart our wants, and from him we receive supplies. There are carried on those sweet and soul-comforting transactions, which though in themselves perfectly indescribable, are among the highest felicities of life. There it is the soul of the believer goeth forth in prayer and praise on the person and glories of Jesus: and from thence it is, are derived those incomings of love and mercy, which the Lord himself imparts, when handing that bread in secret, which "none knoweth, saving him that receiveth." But if, "when we draw nigh to the Lord with our mouth, and honour him with our lips, our heart is far from him;" if unconscious of any want in ourselves, or the fulness in Jesus to supply; if we are neither affected with a sense of sin, nor the need of pardoning mercy in Christ, to deliver both from the dominion and guilt of sin; it is no wonder that such blessings do not follow. For certainly if we have nothing to ask from the court of heaven, we can have no immediate errand there. And if we go without divine direction, we shall most probably return without being refreshed in a sense of divine mercy, and come away as empty as we went.

We arose from prayer, and found as usual, our table spread for breakfast. But who spread it? Who provided those rich supplies? We are accustomed, morning by morning, to find our daily bread: but is it not proper to inquire, yea, ought not the question involuntarily to arise in the breast of every thinking man, who, and where is the bountiful giver that provides all? Shall we sit down for ever to those blessings, and feel both the relish, and the ability given us to enjoy them, and never once say, where is the Lord of

the table? And, how shall we thank him for his mercies?

I have often thought, that if the most unawakened and careless heart could but be prevailed upon to pause over his enjoyments, and while sitting down to a plentiful table, were to put the solemn question to himself, why are these blessings thus bestowed upon me? Wherefore is it the morning light is again vouchsafed, and these mercies sent to a creature, that lives but to abuse the divine bounty? Who shall say, to what a gracious end the inquiry might lead? Who can form conclusions what might be the ultimate result of such a pause over the passing events of an unthinking life?

How very beautiful is the description given of our first father, in the garden of Eden, when he found himself awakened into a consciousness of being, and to the blessings with which he was surrounded:—

——As new wak'd from soundest sleep,
Soft on the flow'ry herb I found me laid,
In balmy sweat———————
But who I was, or where, or from what cause,
Knew not.—To speak I tried, and forthwith spake.
My tongue obeyed, and readily could name
Whate'er I saw.—Thou sun (said I) fair light,
And thou enlighten'd earth, so fresh and gay!
Ye hills, and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains,
And ye that live and move, fair creatures! tell,
Tell (if ye saw) how came I thus, how here?
Not of myself—by some great Maker then,
In goodness and in power pre-eminent.
Tell me how I may know him, how adore,
From whom I have, that thus I move and live,
And feel that I am happier than I know.

*Paradise Lost*, Book viii. l. 253.

The breakfast spread, there only needed the blessing to be asked to make our morning mercies suited for our enjoyment. Some have thought the beverage of tea is hurtful, and so it may for aught I know; but if it be so, I venture to believe, that it is principally to the prayerless. And, indeed, how is it to be expected that any thing should be made blessed to our use, if neither the hand that sends the blessing be acknowledged in

his gifts, nor his mercy in the use of them? Thousands of the good things in the Lord's providence which are given to men, are, by the abuse of them, rendered injurious: but who would ascribe this to the good things themselves? The apostle Paul had it in commission to tell the church, "that every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer," 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.

THE GRACE.

Jesus! these are thy bounties which thou hast spread before us! and we are thy creatures also, for whom in thy distinguishing mercy thou hast provided them! Condescend, gracious Lord, to preside at the table of thine own gifts, and sweeten, bless, and sanctify, every morsel with thine own hand.—And while thou art thus mercifully feeding our bodies with the bread that perisheth in using, do thou, Lord, graciously nourish our souls with the bread that endureth to everlasting life! yea, be thou thyself to us, that "living bread which cometh down from heaven, of which whosoever eateth shall live for ever! Lord, evermore give us this bread!" Amen.

We sat down to our morning repast, and the several articles of our table furnished us with sweet subjects for discourse.

The bread became in some degree sacramental. For as we brake it, we were thereby reminded of him, whose body was broken for the sins of his people. So the apostle considered it; and so may all the family of the faithful. "The bread we break, (said Paul) is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" 1 Cor. x. 16. I beg pardon if I err, but I venture to believe, that many a child of God enjoys more of Jesus at his own table, than numbers do at the Lord's table. For if Christ be not seen and received, and enjoyed by faith, in that solemn ordinance, the means of grace do

not answer the end intended, and the service itself is rendered vain and unprofitable!

The butter of our table brought to my recollection him, of whom, long before his birth, it was said, "butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good," Isa. vii. 15. How sweetly accommodating to the circumstances of his people is it thus to behold Christ in the days of his flesh. He that hath taken our nature up to the highest glory, and is the object of wonder and adoration to angels, was once touched with the feeling of our infirmities. "For it behoved him (saith an apostle) to be made like unto his brethren in all things; that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted," Heb. ii. 17, 18.

Neither could our milk and our honey fail to call to our remembrance the land of promise, and the many blessed things which flow with sweetness in the gospel. And surely it was impossible to forget the graciousness of the Lord Jesus, when commending the loveliness of his church under those similitudes. "Thy lips, O my spouse, (saith the Lord) drop as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon," Song iv. 11. It is, indeed, most blessed, when the Lord's people in their discourse, continually have the savour of Jesus. When the lips drop in prayer and praise, and "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." And when all this, like the unceasing drops of the honeycomb, is free and without constraint, not by pressure, but of a ready mind; and as that golden measure, which no sooner hath deposited one portion, but instantly forms another, and never ceaseth while the substance remains. It is like what Solomon calls "the

pleasant words of the honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones," Prov. xvi. 24.

Our breakfast party found real refreshment, both to soul and body, from such conversation; and our table became truly spiritual. And what should hinder every family meal from similar enjoyment, if the nether springs of the Lord's providence were thus always seasoned with the upper springs of the Lord's grace?

I have often read, and with peculiar pleasure, the gracious provision which Moses, the man of God, made in those precepts to Israel, in which he directed them to blend spiritual improvements with temporal mercies. "Thou shalt lay up (said Moses) these words in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them to thy children; speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way; when thou liest down, and when thou risest up," Deut. xi. 18, 19. And what a lovely edifying discourse did the history of Israel continually furnish! The imagination can hardly picture to itself a sight more interesting, than that of a father of a jewish family, encircled by his little ones, opening and explaining to their tender minds, the wonderful subject of the God of Abraham's love to his people!

And what tends yet more to mark the prominent features of the jewish history on these points, is the promptness which is represented in the children's minds, to get acquainted with the marvellous subject of Jehovah's distinguishing love to their fathers. It is evident, from what is related in the sacred writings on this part of the word of God, that the fathers were supposed not to be more alive to teach, than their children were to learn, a subject so truly gracious and wonderful "It shall come to pass (said Moses) when thy son asketh thee, in time to come, saying, "what mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you? Then thou

shalt say unto him, we were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out with a mighty hand," Deut. vi. 20, 21.

And is the thirst for knowledge in the youthful minds of the present day, less than in those early ages? Is the glorious subject of redemption by Jesus Christ less interesting to call up the attention of our little ones, than the jewish history, which was but a type and shadow of it? Surely not—the Lord that planted the desire in Israel's children to become acquainted with the wonderful events of their father's deliverance, hath not given less interest in the minds of every rising generation, to hear and regard the great things of salvation by Israel's Lord. And if the sight of a jewish father, encircled by his household, for the purposes of instruction, become so lovely, what might we not figure to ourselves of every thing that is delightful, were we to present to the imagination the christian father imparting to his children those soul-transporting subjects, which relate to the person, offices, and character of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am bold to say, that children, yea, even very little children, as early as the mind is capable of receiving any impression, are all alive, and earnest, and would sit for ever to the relation of such histories as the bible affords. And this is evident from the questions they sometimes put in the midst of an interesting subject. How very pertinent and striking they are frequently found! And what conclusions they make, so as to excite astonishment in persons of riper years!

Moreover, it should be observed, that where there is a disposition in a family to mingle discourse of a profitable and edifying nature at the seasons of meals, numberless occasions arise at a table, to furnish out means for such improvements. The circumstance of a fly falling into a bason of water, in our tea-tray, afforded ample materials of this kind. We had nearly finished

our breakfast when this occurred; and every one's attention was instantly arrested to its recovery.

The poor insect had ventured too near the edge of the bason, it would seem, and by some means losing its hold, had suddenly fallen into the water, and all its efforts proved ineffectual to get out. Our knowledge of the event was immediate, from beholding one of our little ones as quick as lightning engaged in helping it from the water; and which was as instantly done, and put gently upon the waiter to recover itself, both from its danger and fright. The little creature seemed conscious of its deliverance, and began to wipe its silken wings and prepare for flight.

I took occasion to observe, what a striking emblem of our fall by nature, and our total inability of effecting our recovery by any exertions of our own, and of Christ's interposition for our salvation. What must have been the consequence to the poor fly, but a watery grave, had not some kind hand taken it out? And what our everlasting lost estate, had not Jesus interposed and delivered us from the wrath to come? What could be the language of this little insect, could it speak of the mercy received? And what ought to be the effusions of our hearts, in the consciousness that Jesus remembered us in our low estate, "for his mercy endureth for ever?" Say, child, (I said) doth it not delight your heart to have rescued this poor creature from destruction? Think then, what must be the glory of the Lord Jesus, in saving millions of souls from everlasting ruin, and bringing them around his throne in heaven! Go, sweet fly, I said, as I finished the observation, (for by this time the little creature had fully dried its wings, and was in the act of departure) go, and tell, if thou art able, what dangers thou hast escaped, and what a kind hand brought thee to a place of safety. And let us go, my children, I said, as we arose from the table, having finished our morning

repast, and in the language of one of old, made sensible of redeeming mercy, to every one we meet, let us say, "Oh! come hither and hearken, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul," Psalm lxvi. 16.

### THE TABLE DISMISSED.

Lord! as through thy goodness we have sat down to thy bounties, help us to arise to thy praise. Blessed be our God, for all his refreshments, both in providence and grace. Let all thy blessings flow to us in a covenant way; that while all the benefit is ours, the glory may be all thine, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

## XXIII.

### THE TRAVELLER.

The night was hastening fast upon us, and our little party were all longing for the sight of the inn. Every mile appeared as two, and every mile-stone we beheld was welcomed with more than ordinary delight: like school-boys looking forward to the holidays, we counted the lessening number as we passed them with increasing pleasure. At length the smoke from the chimney told us that we were near. The inn soon opened to our view, and the post-boy drove up to the door.

How very delightful to a weary traveller is the sight of an inn! And though he turneth in but as the wayfaring man, to tarry but for a night, yet it is a night in which refreshment seems doubly refreshing. And it must be poor accommodation indeed, or a man must be difficult to be pleased, which satisfieth not at such seasons. Hunger gives a relish to the food, and makes every thing palatable.

It is not a little gratifying to the traveller, to observe with what eagerness every one interested in the welfare of an inn, hastens on your arrival to bid you welcome. Is it pride, or is it somewhat better in the human mind, which feels pleased with such attention? The wheels of our chaise had scarce ceased before that we found ourselves surrounded by many of the house, to open to us the door of our carriage, and to shew us to a room.

Our first inquiry as usual, can you take us in? Can we have beds? Can we have somewhat to eat? Yes, yes! echoed at the same time from several voices, as if eager to shew their promptness to please.

Blessed Lord Jesus! (I said to myself, as I beheld their attention) how vast the difference that marked

thy reception when upon earth. "There was no room for Jesus in the inn!" Alas! every house and every heart he found bolted against him. "The Son of man had not where to lay his head." And although, when this Lord of life and glory came, "he came unto his own, but his own received him not;" whereas here am I, a stranger, and yet cordially received by strangers. Blush, inhospitable world, at the recollection of the coldness of reception given to thy Maker and Redeemer!

But pause my soul over the review! Am I not drawing the portrait of myself? How long did my poor sinful heart stand resolutely shut against Jesus? And to this hour, yea, and for ever would have remained so, had not my Lord, in mercy to me, opened it to himself, and "made me willing in the day of his power."

We entered the inn. The Lord be praised, I said, for this day's mercies. Every moment teems with them, and especially to the traveller. And sometimes they come so directed and personal, as if sent with a special commission; yea, as if a voice spake in them, like those words of the wise man, "that thy trust may be in the Lord, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee," Prov. xxii. 19.

Perhaps my reader, if he be a traveller, may, in his own experience, know somewhat of these things. During the course of my short and insignificant life, and few as my travels have been, I have seen numberless instances where mercies have come so pointed and distinguishing as it was hardly possible even for a carnal mind to overlook them. Many a case of what the world would call accident, which hath carried with it a plain mark of divine ordination. How often hath the traveller, whose journey was meant but only for passing through the town or village, been suddenly arrested by sickness, and detained there? He intended

the inn but as the place for momentary refreshment, but it hath proved an hospital of long pain; yea, and to many proved the house of death. I have known these things in the history of others, but through the Lord's goodness over me, not in my own. And were not my mercies then distinguishing mercies? Hath the reader in his own instance known any thing of the kind? And if so, will he not also call them distinguishing? Oh! who shall calculate the gracious watchings of the Lord over his people, both before they knew the Lord as well as after? Who shall recount what distinguishing mercies both in providence and grace, have been displayed for them through their whole journey of life? What seemingly hair-breadth escapes! What wardings off of hurt in the moment of danger! And what tends to endear them the more, when the poor, forgetful, and too often unconscious heart is called back to their recollection, they are often made strikingly distinguishing, that in the very moment they are manifested to us, the same events in which we have been involved together with others have proved fatal to them. The church in one of the sweetest psalms, after enumerating a long catalogue of mercies shewn by her Lord, sums up the whole in a beautiful conclusion—"Whoso is wise will ponder these things, and they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord," Psalm cvii. 43.

For my own part, conscious as I am how apt I am to forget divine mercies, and to make their record but as impressions on the water, I earnestly beg that God the Holy Ghost, in that sweet office of his as the remembrancer of Christ Jesus, will keep alive in my poor forgetful heart the constant recollection of divine mercies, and especially such as are more immediately personal and distinguishing. And in this sense, every inn will form a pillar of remembrance. Here shall I set up, both at entrance and departure, the renewed Eben-

ezer: and the heart, under grace, will involuntarily burst forth in praise, "hitherto hath the Lord helped."

The waiter followed us, or rather led us to the room, and stood, as if expecting our commands. I interpreted his looks. Give us, I said, if you please, any little matter of food your house furnished. But first, I added, it is the custom of myself and family to bless God in prayer for his mercies over us. If, therefore, your master or mistress, with as many of your household, in visitors or servants, as feel disposed, will join us in family worship, we shall be very happy to see them.

What a damp have I sometimes seen the very mention of prayer to make on the countenance of graceless persons! What a reluctancy and aversion have I beheld in the features of the waiter at the bare proposal! Reader, have you considered the cause? Is it, indeed, so unsuitable and unbecoming in creatures such as we are, to bow the knee before the mercy-seat? Even upon common principles of gratitude, doth man with man dislike the acknowledgment of favours received? O no! an ungrateful fellow is every one's aversion. And is gratitude only then becoming unsuitable when it is offered from man to God? Oh, how fully, could graceless persons but see things as they are, how fully doth such a conduct prove the truth of that solemn scripture, "the carnal mind is enmity against God!" Rom. viii. 7.

Well do I remember in the family of one who is now a peer of the realm, where the most sovereign contempt was manifested by a valet of the house to family worship. Not satisfied with constantly absenting himself upon those occasions when prayer was observed in the house, he proceeded to shew a yet more decided hatred to the service, and made a point to insult the whole family while at their devotions. For this purpose he contrived to place himself in the adjoining room to the one in which they had assembled; and by noise in

whistling, singing, or throwing about the furniture, as his corrupt humour directed him, to turn, if he could, the whole solemnity into ridicule. It was impossible with impunity to pass over unnoticed an insolence so unpardonable. But without being supposed to know that this conduct of his was designed, his master took occasion to inquire of him how it was that he never attended family prayer. 'Prayer!' said he, (and with the most impudent brow of scorn and derision) 'I never did live in a praying family, and I never will.' True, my friend, I said in answer when I heard it; you have for once spoken the truth. You never have known, it is plain by what you have said, what prayer is, and the blessedness of it; and living and dying in this prayerless state, you never will. For in hell there are no prayers, and to that family you are hastening, and ere long will live in it for ever.

But to return. Though I have sometimes, and not unfrequently, observed the alteration made upon the countenance of the waiter at the inn in my proposal of prayer, yet the reader should be told also, that such things have never discouraged me from constantly following up the invitation at whatever inn I come. On the contrary, by a firm and decided perseverance, I have in many places overcome all difficulty. Indeed now, from long custom, and especially in those inns where, from going more than once, I am known, the thing is in some measure become habitual; and the inhabitants of those inns would, I believe, be disappointed were I to omit the invitation. And I can assure the reader that sometimes we have formed no small congregations at those places.

And I take occasion herefrom to admonish the godly traveller, (if so be my little tract should by the Lord's appointment fall into such hands) that if he would wish to call such a family as that which constitutes an inn to prayer, (and nothing can be more desirable) he will

persevere in invitations as I have done. It may be somewhat irksome at the first, but it soon wears off. It forms a duty of an high nature. Who knows what hidden ones of the Lord may be in such an house? Who shall say what blessed consequences may follow? Let no man shrink from it. That sweet promise is absolute—"In due season we shall reap if we faint not." And even in those instances where we may conclude we are least successful, and where the frivolous excuses I have known brought; such as the master and mistress are engaged, the house is full of company—sorry they cannot attend—yet even here the invitation may, through the Lord, have a blessed effect. The remembrance of it may operate when least expected; it may be brought home in some sick and sorrowful hour with conviction on the conscience, in having refused prayer; and it may be commissioned of the Lord to enter the heart, and "like bread cast upon the waters, be found after many days." Go on then with the invitation, and leave the event with the Lord; "He hath the hearts of all men at his disposal, and like rivers of water, he turneth them whithersoever he pleaseth."

And if my reader be himself a partaker of grace, he need not that I should tell him that the grand object, in bringing prayerless families under the means of grace and ordinances of worship, is not to do what nature untaught of grace can never do—to open a communion with the Lord; for there must first be an acquaintance with the Lord, before there can be peace with him. No communion with God in Christ until a consciousness of union is formed with Christ. But the ordinances and means of grace, both in public worship and family prayer, are observed with an eye to this blessing. And "as faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," we bring our households and our little ones under the means, looking to the Lord for his blessing upon them. And should our call on prayerless

families be accompanied with the Lord's favour, they may, and they will then be made to minister to his glory, and his people's happiness, "in making themselves wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Perhaps the reader may wish to know the plan of worship I observe in these instances when at an inn, and when any part of the household accept my invitation. I will very gladly inform him.

As soon as I find the invited party entering the room, in order to prevent all awkwardness, and to take off all embarrassment, I immediately arise and take chairs for every one of them; and as soon as we are all seated, I take a bible and read a short portion of the word of God, and then add a few observations upon it. As a sample, the reader will, I hope, kindly accept the following:—

PSALM CXVII.

1. Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen waketh but in vain.

2. It is in vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so he giveth his beloved sleep.

3. Lo! children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

4. As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of the youth.

5. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

OBSERVATIONS.

In whatever point of view, as builders, or as watchmen in the church of God, the improvements to be drawn from this sweet scripture, when the great author of it, God the Holy Ghost, becomes our teacher, must

be blessed. We who are travellers, and you who are stationary and at home, may under his grace derive the same conclusions from it; and very blessed they will be when the Lord applies them.

Except the Lord both build and watch, both sanctify and prosper, nothing in temporal pursuits, neither in spiritual, can be productive of happiness. The builder layeth his foundation, of whatever kind it may be, but in the sand, who doth not rest upon Christ, the Rock of Ages. And all the watchfulness of the watchmen cannot keep our persons or our dwelling-place in safety, no, not for an hour, unless Jesus becomes our confidence. This very night which we are entered upon, neither of us can be sure to finish, or behold once more the morning light, without the Lord's appointment. The carelessness of friends, as well as the malice of enemies, may bring both our bodies and our dwelling-place to the dust, and carry our souls into eternity, for aught we can either of us do to prevent. And what a solemn consideration ought this to be to every one of us to seek the favour and protection of the Lord!

This beautiful psalm saith, "it is in vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrow." Perhaps few persons to whom these words are more applicable than to the inhabitants of an inn. For who so exposed to early and to late hours, and subject to a thousand calls as you are? And although it be nothing dishonourable, but on the contrary most useful and beneficial in these services to many, to myself, and travellers, particularly in ministering to our wants, yet unless you are looking beyond the present state of things for somewhat more satisfying to your own future welfare, no one would wish to be always living in a hurry and confusion. Is it not thus as the psalmist saith, that "the Lord giveth his beloved sleep." I must take it for granted, therefore, that every one of

you, as well as myself and family, are earnest at length to obtain that "rest which remaineth for the people of God." Conscious of the dying state of things around you; conscious of the dying state of every thing within you; beholding in yourselves, and in the circumstances of others, that here "we have no continuing city!"—would it not be wise to seek "one that is to come?" And the word of God blessedly holds out to our view, and proposeth it to our attainment, that "city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God."

Let us but figure to ourselves a family, an household like your's, where all the several inhabitants of it are framing their views, their hopes, their pursuits, upon this model. They behold all things in this changeable dying world as the inn you dwell in, where there is a continued succession of new faces; the persons you see and attend to-day, you perhaps see them no more for ever. If convinced that nothing short of an interest in Christ can secure happiness, amidst the continued alteration of persons and things around, your hearts are led to him, all is well. Building upon the Lord for your everlasting welfare, making him the first and last, and grand object of all your concern; living to him, and living upon him; delighting in his holy word, delighting in his holy sabbaths, delighting in his ordinances; beginning every day in prayer, and ending it in praise; what shall arise, nay, what can arise, to defeat your happiness? Then in every state, and in every situation, whether high or low, rich or poor, master or servant, in sickness or in health, in life or death, time or eternity, all must be blessed, because all is founded in Christ. This is to prove what one of the apostles hath said, "godliness is profitable unto all things: it hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." It will be happy for you, for me, for all his redeemed, if the Lord should direct your hearts to the pursuit of this great end. Thus

building on the rock Christ Jesus, we may and ought to take to ourselves the whole blessedness of this sweet psalm. Happy is the man, happy the house, happy the family, whose quiver is blessed with such inhabitants. "They shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate."

Let us go to the throne of grace, and follow up this holy psalm with prayer.

### AN EVENING PRAYER AT AN INN.

Infinitely great and glorious Lord God Almighty! which is, and which was, and which is to come, we pray for grace to approach the footstool of thy throne, in that new and living way which thou hast consecrated for us through the vail of Christ's flesh. And as we are a company of poor and needy and sinful creatures, we humbly beg to spread both our persons and our supplications before our God in Christ.

It hath been well known to our Lord, and that from all eternity, that the very souls which now present themselves at the pardon-office of Jesus, would at this time, and in this place, meet together to seek a blessing from our God. It was well known then, and it is well known now, to our God, what mercies would be suited for us to receive, and for the glory of our God to bestow. And we hope and trust that our God is come forth this evening, to give us those several blessings the Lord knows we want, and which hath been treasured up for us for this hour, in the hands of the Lord Jesus from all eternity. O our God! disappoint us not of our hope; and suffer not one of the needy souls which are before thee to arise from the footstool of thy throne without our blessing, neither send any empty away.

Lord, thou knowest that we all stand in need of pardon, mercy, and peace, in the blood of the cross, as we need our daily bread. And though we are utterly un-

worthy of any blessing from thee, yet vouchsafe to be very gracious to us for Jesu's sake. Look upon us in him, and bless us in him; and we shall be blessed indeed.

Let the portion of thy holy word which hath been read to us this evening, in our little assembly, be made life and spirit to our souls; and the observations offered upon it, as far as agreeable to thy truth bless also. And do thou give to us, at all times when reading or hearing thy word, the hearing ear, and the seeing eye, and the understanding and believing heart; and may thy word come with power and the Holy Ghost.

Finally, blessed Lord, do thou graciously accept our praises for every mercy of life, in nature, providence, grace, and hereafter glory; all sweetened as they are, and sanctified in the Lord Jesus. God be praised for his mercies over us travellers in the past day. And may the Lord's goodness be seen and acknowledged for their mercies to the inhabitants of this house. Lord, pour out a spirit of grace and supplication upon them, that it may never be said of this family, that it is a prayerless family. Pardon the iniquity of our most holy things, for the sake of that sin-bearing Lamb of God, that beareth away into the land of everlasting forgetfulness the sins of his people. And do thou, Lord, in a way of grace, and mercy, and salvation, infinitely more and better for us than we can ask or think, for Jesu's sake. Amen.

Our Father which art in heaven, &c.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

### THE MORNING AT THE INN.

The morning at the inn opened in grace, and brought to my recollection that sweet promise—"and my people (saith the Lord) shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places," Isa. xxxii. 18. Such I found it then, and such I find

it now. It is very blessed to be awakened with a promise. A promise so brought, and so applied, must be of the Lord, for it can be of no other. And surely the sweet savour of it runs through the whole day.

The first moments of the morning are sweet, and at an inn they are peculiarly so; for there is nobody to interrupt you, no one to break in upon you—all alone, and yet not alone, as Jesus said; for we are never less alone than when alone. The sweetest moments of life are those in which the world hath nothing to do with you, John xvi. 32. But I know the blessedness also of society; I mean such society as the prophet speaks of, Malachi iii. 6, 17.

As soon, however, as things could be brought into action, and the world up, (I mean the little world I was then in, the inn) I hastened the family to prayer and breakfast. We were soon assembled. I read a portion of the word of God,* and followed it up with prayer.

A MORNING PRAYER AT AN INN.

Blessed be a covenant God in Christ, who hath preserved our persons and our dwelling-place in safety through the night, and brought us all in health and peace and safety to the light of this new day. Blessed be the Lord for his mercies! And praised be our God who hath caused us to assemble once more before him, to present ourselves before his mercy-seat, to hear his holy word, and call upon his holy name. Lord, give us grace to prize those mercies as distinguishing mercies, when we call to mind those prayerless families, who lie down and rise up as herds of the stall, never once saying, "where is God my maker?" Lord, we desire to acknowledge that it is thy grace, not our

* If the reader wishes, he will find matter for observation in my Poor Man's Commentary.

worth, thy mercy, not our merit, which makes all the difference!

And now, Lord, we are all here before thee, receive us as poor, needy helpless creatures, who wait thy bounty. We have nothing to bring, nothing to offer; but, Lord, we come to receive, not to give. Jesus will be glorified in giving out of his fulness, and we shall be made happy in receiving of his salvation. Surely the riches of our God's grace will be magnified, in pouring out a profusion of his mercies upon such poor, weak, and helpless worms as we are. Is it not on such Jesus causeth his glory to shine?

We come, Lord, as guilty sinners to be pardoned, as unholy to be cleansed, as naked to be clothed, as hungry to be fed; yea, we come as wretched in ourselves to be made happy in Jesus. And will not Jesus receive us, pardon, cleanse, clothe, feed us, and make us everlastingly blessed in himself? Yea, is not Jesus's glory, as the head of his church, made complete when making his members blessed in him? From such grace we shall be made indeed most blessed, and everlastingly happy in him; but our adorable Lord will get glory by each, and glory in and from all. Oh, then, be thou, dearest Lord, be thou most blessed in thy people, and abundantly glorious in thy redeemed! Look with mercy upon thine whole church. Bless every one of thine in this place. Are there any of thine in this inn to be gathered to thee?—Oh hasten the happy hour! Are there not many who belong to Zion in this place, whom Jesus loveth that are sick? Look in, Lord, upon them and bless them. Oh may they hear the rod, and who hath appointed it! Be with us who are about to depart from this place, and go before us in the pillar of cloud by day, and in the pillar of fire by night. And will our God leave a blessing behind him in those of his which remain in this inn. May the blessing of the

Father, Son, and Spirit, be with each and with all of thy people!

And now, gracious Lord, before we arise from the footstool of thy throne, and separate from each other, add one blessing more to what we have now received, and as we have been permitted to meet together before thy throne of grace upon earth, may we meet, if it be thine holy will, before thy throne of glory in heaven, in and through Jesus Christ our Lord; through whom we pray for grace to ascribe to the one glorious and eternal Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all glory, praise, and power, now and for ever. Amen.

Our Father which art in heaven, &c.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

When we had taken refreshment, finished our breakfast, and paid our bill, there was but one thing more to perform. Those little claims upon travellers, in servants and waiters, I like to own. My pocket, indeed, is but scanty; nevertheless travelling is not every day. If I err in extravagance, it is, I confess, upon those occasions. I would stint myself a thousand ways rather than be mean to those whose lives are spent in accommodating others. Besides, it is their all, their livelihood; and for which they give up their whole time and comfort. Jesus hath said, "the labourer is worthy of his hire." And Solomon saith, "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty," Prov. xi. 24.

As I distributed the little moities around, and we were on the tiptoe of departere, I said, farewell! Do not forget the word of God you have heard, neither the throne of grace to which you have been. The Lord forbid that that throne should be a witness against you or me another day! and that it will if we neglect to go there. Oh, remember what borderers we

all are upon the other world. The chaise is now, as you see, at the door, to take me and those with me away; in a few minutes you will see me and them no more. In like manner the carriage of death will shortly call for every one of you; and then the clamors and demands of this inn will be no more to you than though you had never lived here. Yea, the inn itself in which you are now so busily engaged, will feel no more concern for you, but turn you out as though it had never known you. Oh, look to Jesus; make him your portion now, and he will be a portion to live upon to all eternity. We stept into the chaise—farewell, I said—and we parted—perhaps for ever!

## XXIV.

### THE FRIEND THAT LOVETH AT ALL TIMES

'Is it not rather an extraordinary name for a book,' said a youth, as he passed the bookseller's shop, and read the title-page as it lay in the window, "The Friend that loveth at all times?"

'Yes,' answered an elderly man, who happened to be standing near him, and overheard the question; 'but much more extraordinary, if it be true, must be the person to whom it refers. I have been,' added he, 'conversant in the world for many a year, and, from long experience of mankind, can truly say, I have never found such a character. Frendship is a plant too delicate and tender to thrive in any great degree of luxuriancy and fruitfulness, in the soil of the human heart.'

'I hope not so,' replied the youth; and, as he said it, he intimated by his manner of speaking, that he felt somewhat indignant at the seeming want of generosity in the old man's sentiments. 'I have been sometimes much delighted,' added the boy, 'in my school exercises, in perusing histories of the most disinterested friendship. The sacred, as well as profane writings, are not without very striking instances of the kind. What think you of the loves of Jonathan and David, in the one, or of those of Damon and Pythias, in the other?*

* As it is more than probable, that many of my youthful readers may not be acquainted with the interesting account which is given us in history, of the friendship marked in the characters of Damon and Pythias; and, as this highly finished example of friendship will, nevertheless, in the comparison, serve yet more fully to heighten in the view his unequalled friendship, which this little book is intended to bring forward to the reader's contemplation and regard, it may not be amiss nor unacceptable, to sketch the outlines of it in a note in this way.

Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, had passed sentence of death upon Damon, and the day of his execution was fixed. The poor man begged but one favour

Nay, I rather think the word of God seems to authorize the conclusion, that the thing itself is not to be supposed singular and uncommon, since it speaks of friendship, under the general idea, "that a friend is as a man's own soul."

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from the tyrant, which was, that he might be permitted to visit his family, at that time distant a considerable way from him, promising faithfully to return on the day appointed. This Dionysius refused, unless some hostage could be found, who would consent to suffer death in his stead, if he failed in his engagement of return. The thing appeared so improbable, that any man would volunteer in such a service, that Damon gave over all hopes of ever seeing his family again.

It so happened, that Pythias, the friend of Damon, heard of the tyrant's proposal; and unknown to Damon, offered himself to Dionysius, and was accepted. Damon was therefore liberated, and Pythias imprisoned.

Various untoward circumstances occurred to prevent the return of Damon, beyond the period he had hoped; and the very morning of the proposed execution had dawned upon Syracuse before his arrival.

The historian, to whom we are indebted for the relation of this interesting tale, hath beautifully described the different feelings of the several parties in the most lively colours. But I must compress my relation of it within the narrowest compass.

Dionysius had the curiosity to visit Pythias in the prison, as the day of the intended execution drew near, to remark what views he now had, of what he deemed the folly of his conduct. He found the generous man full of joy, in the prospect that, by his death, he should save a life abundantly more valuable than his own, and expressing his hopes, that unfavourable winds might prevent his friend's return.

When the hour arrived, Pythias was led forth to the place of execution. Dionysius also came forth, to feast his eyes with the spectacle. In a short speech, Pythias told the surrounding multitude, that his dear friend Damon would soon arrive; but he hoped, not before his death had ransomed a life so inestimable as his was, to his family, friends, and country; and begged them to call to mind, that, from the adverse winds which had blown from one point for many days past, it was impossible for him to have returned. 'But since yesterday,' says he, 'the wind is changed, and he will be hastening hither. Make dispatch, therefore, executioner, and do your office.' At that moment a voice was heard from among the crowd, 'stop! stop the execution!' The populace joined the cry, until it was echoed from all quarters! It was Damon. He was mounted on a horse covered with foam, from the rapidity with which he had flown. In a moment he leaped from his horse, and was on the scaffold. He could say no more but—'you are safe; you are safe, my friend, and I am happy.' Pythias on the other hand, exclaiming, 'Oh! fatal haste, that hath brought you too soon.'

Dionysius saw what passed, and, for the first time, felt the force of generous friendship. He descended from his throne, and mounted the platform; and from a conviction, not to be resisted, cried out, 'live, ye generous friends, both of ye, and form my mind, by such an illustrious example of friendship, to imitate a virtue so truly noble.'

'Young man,' replied the elder, 'I am more pleased than offended with the generous warmth you feel in the view of this subject. At your time of life, it is just what it should be; and corresponds to the state of an open candid mind, as yet unhackneyed in the ways of men. And far be it from me, for any thing I have said, to raise improper prejudices in your youthful breast. It will be time enough for you, as you go on through the world, to make discoveries for yourself. And indeed, for my own part, had I the same path to tread over again, which I have already trodden, much rather would I feel afresh the occasional wounds of disappointed friendship, than to go always clad in the armour of suspicious jealousy. Yet thus much I must presume to say, young man, you will be very highly favoured in the friendships you may form in life, if, more or less, a general disappointment doth not mark them all. And, if you recollect the elegant lines of Cowper, you will find that my ideas on this subject are not singular.'

> Horatio's servant, once with bow and cringe,
> Swinging the parlour door upon its hinge;
> Dreading a negative, and overaw'd,
> Lest he should trespass—begg'd to go abroad.
> "Go, fellow, whither?"—turning short about,
> "Nay, stay at home, you're always going out."—
> "Tis but a step, Sir—Just at the street end."—
> "For what?"—"An' please you, Sir, to see a friend."
> "A friend!" Horatio cry'd, and seem'd to start,
> "Yes, marry shalt thou and with all my heart.
> "And fetch my cloke; for though the night be raw,
> "I'll see him too—the first I ever saw."

The young man's curiosity was but the more excited by the old gentleman's observations on the subject, to know somewhat of a person whose friendship was so constant and uninterrupted, as "to love at all times." So, stepping into the shop, he accosted the bookseller —'Pray, Sir,' said he, 'doth that little book yonder,' pointing to it as he spake, 'contain the history of a real person?' 'Yes, Sir,' answered the bookseller. 'He must be then,' said the youth, 'a most interest-

ing, as well as a very singular character.'—'He is indeed,' replied the bookseller, 'and the only Being in the universe of whom it could ever be said. For the highest possible instance of mere human friendship, is that which the Redeemer speaks of, when he saith, "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But it is one, among many other striking peculiarities in his friendship, of whom this litte book treats, that "he laid down his life for his enemies."'

The young man seemed to be much struck with the bookseller's account; so that, making a purchase of this little tract, he took it home with him, and found the relation of it to be as follows:—

### THE FRIEND THAT LOVETH AT ALL TIMES.

If a pure, generous, and disinterested friendship be among the sweeteners of life, so that without some portion of it in every man's cup, most, even of the pleasantest draughts we sip, would be vapid and tasteless: what a source of the most exquisite happiness pours into the mind, in the knowledge and enjoyment of him and his friendship, who, among the numberless other endearing relations in which he stands connected with his people, forms this as a very distinguishing feature of character, that he loveth at all times; and is one that sticketh closer than a brother. Such, in a very eminent degree, and, indeed, in a manner wholly unequalled by any other, is the Lord Jesus Christ. His friendship not only sweetens, and gives a relish to all our pleasures, but serves to correct whatever is bitter in our potions. Let but Jesus be in the lot of his people, and nothing can be unpleasant.

And that it must be so, is obvious, on a moment's consideration. For what is it, in common life, that tends to endear the friend, and recommend the acquaintance among men, of one more than another? Is

it not because from the possession of certain qualities of the mind in kindness, affection, generosity, and the like, which we discover, or think that we discover, in those we love, we give them a pre-eminent place in our esteem? And what is all this, but because certain proportions of grace, which gives a tincture of amiableness to the manners, being poured into the hearts of those we more immediately regard, they arrest our affections, and have a larger claim upon the heart. And depend upon it, if the principle was to be analyzed for the discovery of the cause, it would be found, that it is this which makes all that difference we behold in life, and by which, according to due estimate, we learn to appreciate between man and man.

If then a small mixture of grace, in the best of characters found among men, mingled as it is, after all, with a large portion of human infirmity, shall nevertheless induce such effects as to engage the heart, and win the affections of every beholder; think what endearing recommendations he brings with him, who is not only in himself every thing that is lovely, without the smallest taint of imperfection, but into whose sanctified bosom the Holy Ghost with all his graces, was "given without measure," John iii. 34. It was sweetly said of him, in allusion to the holiness of his human nature, and under an authority not to be mistaken, "thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever," Psalm xlv. 2.

My young reader, (for this little work is intended with a peculiar reference to your youthful mind) suffer me to arrest your attention to the view of Jesus, under this one interesting feature of character; and when I shall have brought before you the outlines of this Almighty Friend that loveth at all times, I shall leave it with your own heart to determine, whether he, and he only, is not the very person the title-page points to,

"the altogether lovely, and the chiefest among ten thousand."

If we consider him as he is in his person, here at once we contemplate in him what can be said of no other; for "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." An assemblage of all the divine perfections meet and centre in him. There is not an attribute which constitutes Deity, in any of the distinguishing properties of character, but what eminently shines forth in the person of the Lord Jesus. So that, by virtue of an union of the manhood with the Godhead, in this one only instance in which that union ever met, in the person of the holy child Christ; such a sanctity is imparted, as includes all that is sacred and gracious: and excludes every thing that is unhallowed and unholy.

I stay not to contemplate the glories of his person, as they shone forth in the work of our salvation, for they would lead me too far into the subject. I only indeed advert to this unity of nature, in order to intimate how very precious he must be in whom both natures are joined. Never, surely, did the world of intelligent creatures behold so glorious an object as in the person of the God-man Christ Jesus. And considered as he is in himself, there is enough in him to call up never-ceasing contemplation, and to exercise the intellectual faculties both of angels and men, in wonder, love, and praise, to all eternity.

It is beautiful, as well as instructive, to contrast the nature of our Lord with that of every other character taken from among men; in order to ascertain, as far as we are able to trace, the subject of his immaculate perfections, distinguished from the amiable but sullied qualities of the mind, which are discoverable, even when beheld in the highest attainments, in beings merely human.

There is not a character among the sons of men,

but, however valuable he may seem, will be found to have some alloy, some abatement, which must be made to any supposed excellencies he is said to possess. Hence, if the generous heart hath a warmth of affection which interests him to take part with the distressed, the same warmth of temper will prompt him to be equally alive to resentment. It is impossible, in our present state, to be cold and unfeeling to injuries, while warm and animated to acts of benevolence. The corruptions of a fallen nature will unavoidably mingle with some of the best remains of the human frame! There will be found, in one and the same character, the greatest opposites of qualities: seriousness, with levity; kindness, with inattention; generosity, with selfishness; and the like. And the reason is obvious. In the present state of frailty, every thing is mixed and blended—there is nothing perfect. Hence, among minds of constitutional gentleness, and more especially among such as divine grace hath in part renewed, we discover somewhat which bears resemblance to what in itself may be deemed excellent; yet, in the very moment these qualities are discovered, we may discern evident marks accompanying them, that they are not the general uniform feature of the whole character: they rather strike our view, as the breakings forth of somewhat that was once great and noble in the human mind, emerging from the general wreck of our nature, induced by the fall; similar to what we have seen, or read of, in history, of the remaining vestiges of magnificent palaces, whose broken arches, and defaced sculptures, serve to shew what they once were; but whose original splendour can now only be conceived from their present ruins.

But with him, who is the friend at all times, every grace is complete. No mixture, no traits of imperfection, are in him. What he was, and is, and ever will be, he is wholly so. His graces are all pure and

unmixed. They form so many standards of character. For his nature being underived from the common stock of mankind, but formed by the impregnating influence of the Holy Ghost, he hath no participation in the frailties of the human race. One of his servants hath beautifully drawn his portrait, and it differs from that of every other portrait, in having nothing of shade; and the sweet features of his lovely character he thus describes: "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," Heb. vii. 26.

But this is not all. It is not enough, when taking a comparative view of the excellencies of the Lord Jesus, with the supposed excellencies of others; it is not enough to say, that he leaves at an infinite distance all that may be deemed lovely or recommending among men; but it must be observed also, that he is comprehensive of whatever is excellent; and every thing that is truly excellent must originate in him. For as what he is in himself is original and underived; so whatever excellencies are found in others, must have been derived from him. Here we come to the grand point, in the discrimination of character. I may, and do admire, every one of the amiable qualities which I behold in men. They are all so many accomplishments in the endearments of society. But it is right to trace them to their source. Neither doth it in a single instance lessen, but rather tend to enhance their value, when it is discovered from whence they flow. And when I am led to behold that it is wholly and altogether from the imparted graces of Jesus to our nature, that any among the sons of men are made lovely; while this serves to heighten them yet more in my esteem, from their relationship to him, it serves no less to endear the blessed Redeemer of mankind himself, in more interesting tenderness to my heart.

I hope the reader will feel no repugnance to the belief of this doctrine. There is no reason he should.

There is nothing, there can be nothing, I am sure, in the poor fallen circumstances of our nature, to render us truly meritorious before God. And the highest privilege we enjoy is, to be "accepted in the beloved." It is because God our Father is well pleased with Jesus for his righteousness sake, and with us in him; that we "who were once afar off, are brought nigh by his blood." Hence, therefore, Jesus is comprehensive of all things that are in themselves amiable; and he is the source of all. And, in reality, created excellencies of every kind and degree, found among men, are but so many emanations from him. With us they are like streams, whose very existence depends upon the fountain; or like the rays of light, whose borrowed brightness can shine no longer than while the source which gives birth to them shall continue to emit its influence. But, in Jesus, all perfections are uncreated and underived; and, in him, they shine forth with one uniform unceasing lustre, as the Sun of Righteousness "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Think then, what a fulness of grace must be in him, who includes all that can be truly termed so, and from whom all graces must be derived. And must he not then be every thing endearing in his person, who is thus lovely in himself, and the very source by which every creature that is at all engaging is made lovely also?

Let the youthful reader pass over this short representation of Jesus; and then let him determine for himself, whether there be an object in the universe which hath such unanswerable claims upon the human heart, for the cultivation of friendship, as the Redeemer.

But when, in the contemplation of the person of the Lord Jesus, we unite with it the view of his character, in that part of it more especially in which the title-page represents him, as "the Friend that loveth at all times," the arguments which are derived from thence,

added to what hath been already brought forward, will be found increased, as so many various streams forming one river, and risen to such an height and power, as to carry every thing before it.

In the title-page of this little book, Jesus is distinguished by the character of "The Friend that loveth at all times." But to have a proper apprehension of the extensiveness of that friendship, we must take in eternity also. For as it began before the commencement of time, so will its influence reach beyond the period of calculation; being from everlasting to everlasting; "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." And what a delightful thought is it to the human mind, and more especially to the mind of him who hath any consciousness of being interested in the friendship of Jesus, that his love was not only formed before man had any being, but even before the foundations of the earth were laid. Not merely before any creatures inhabited the world, but before the world was made to receive them. Then it was, "his delights were with the sons of men," Prov. viii. 23—31. Anticipating in his comprehensive mind, the things which were to be called into existence; and viewing, as connected with that existence of our nature, the glories of redemption; he longed, as it should seem, for that period, when, by becoming incarnate, he should accomplish the deliverance of his people, and restore our lost state to its original purity and happiness. Gracious Lord! what unequalled friendship is this!

And, if such be the nature of the Redeemer's love in the extent of it, it will be, I hope, readily allowed, in another delightful property connected with it, that it is a friendship altogether free and undeserved. Needs must that it be free and voluntary on the part of Jesus, and unmerited on the part of men, which not only preceded our desert, but even our existence.

But how shall I go on to enumerate the great variety

of methods by which Jesus hath given testimonies of this friendship to our nature? It would weary the arm of an angel to mark down even the outlines of the subject. And indeed the thing itself is impossible, and cannot come within the province of any created power to describe; for what began before time, and reached into eternity, must be in itself endless, and perfectly indescribable.

In that one instance of it only, were I to mention no other—I mean the wondrous plan by which Jesus purchased the ransom of the human soul—with what astonishment may beings, such as we are, contemplate the thing itself, when even angels, with all their high intellectual faculties, do not fully understand, but "desire to look into it!" The imagination fails to figure to itself any thing in idea which can bear the smallest parallel. Could history furnish an example of some mighty prince, liberating his subjects from captivity, with the surrender of his whole dominions, this might be well considered as a noble display of generosity and affection. And if this prince were voluntarily to go into slavery himself, so that by the sacrifice, his faithful servants might be freed from bondage, this would be a still more amazing act of beneficence. But when these instances have been carried to the utmost height in the contemplation, the whole will fall infinitely short in comparison of the friendship of Jesus; for he left the bosom of his Father, and the enjoyment of glory surpassing all conception, when assuming our nature, to give himself a ransom for the souls of men. And this, not for faithful followers, not for loyal subjects, not for true friends, but for rebellious foes. It is the strongest of all possible arguments, with which, as one of the sacred writers observes, "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," Rom. v. 8. In the moment when Jesus came to save the world, our whole nature

was "dead in trespasses and sins." Well might the prophet, in the view of divine mercy, exclaim, "Wonder, ye heavens; and be astonished, O earth!"

I would pause here. I feel myself incompetent to sketch any further this feature of character, in the person of the Lord Jesus! For what human line can fathom "the lengths, and depths, and breadths, and heights, of that love of God which passeth knowledge?"

Who shall take upon him to describe thy friendship, dearest Jesus! which manifested itself in the great undertaking of human redemption; by which thou hast cancelled all our debts, both to law and to justice: made full satisfaction for all our transgressions; raised our fallen nature from the depths of sin; cleansed our polluted souls in thy blood; clothed us with thy robes of righteousness; purchased for us an inheritance of glory; and art gone to take possession of it in our name, assuring us, that thou wilt come again, and receive us to thyself; that where thou art, there we shall be also? Who shall describe the wondrous evidences of thy friendship, in which, even now, thou art still engaged, in pleading our cause before our God and Father; presenting our persons, our prayers, and our poor offerings, perfumed, from all their impurities, by the sweet incense of thy merits; answering all the charges which the great accuser of the brethren is continually bringing against us; and art manifesting there unceasing good-will towards us, in those numberless love-tokens of thy gracious and refreshing presence, the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, and the Father's love shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto us? Who is equal to the full conception of these things, much less to the recital of them?

Reader! let me beg of you, however, to mark down in the memorandums of your mind, amidst this vast

subject, that one feature the title-page recommends the Redeemer under, in the friendship of his character, as coming home with increasing tenderness to the heart, in that "he loveth at all times." Yes! the love of Jesus is constant, everlasting, unchangeable. It is like "the dew from the Lord, which waiteth not for man, neither tarrieth for the sons of men." It not only began before we had any being, and will continue when time shall be no more; but it continues amidst all our unworthiness and undeservings. He loved us, and was a friend to us, not only when we were enemies to him in the first instances of his favour, but since, in a thousand instances, when "we have caused him to serve with our sins, and wearied him with our iniquities." It wounds my very soul in the moment of recollection, that when I have been totally forgetful of him, and all the numberless proofs of his love towards me, his goodness and mercy hath been following of me, and going before me, and surrounding me, all the days of my life. No generosity comes up to that which bestoweth mercies on the undeserving; and, in the example of Jesus, it is displayed in a way surpassing all expressions. While every moment of my existence brings with it some renewed token of his favour, every act of mine carries with it, more or less, evidences of ingratitude and forgetfulness. Methinks I hear him sometimes, after renewed instances of my forgetfulness, expostulating with my wandering heart, in the soft whispers of unabated affection—"Is this thy kindness to thy Friend?" 2 Sam. xvi. 17.

My youthful reader! may I now venture to hope, that through the grace of God preventing you, your heart will henceforth be constrained to the love of him, who is a "Friend that loveth at all times, and one that sticketh closer than a brother." Had I the power of description, equal to the preciousness of his person and character; could I represent in equal terms, what he

is in himself, what he hath done for you, and what his claims are upon you, your heart must be cold indeed, if such views would not warm it.

If, every morning of my life, when descending from my chamber, where I had slept in health, and peace, and safety, I found my table spread with the accustomed refreshment; if, in an hour of need, when some pressing occasion which exceeded my ability to provide for, I received, under cover of a letter, the very supply suited to the demand; if, in seasons of sickness, health unexpectedly returned; if mercies like these, with numberless others, of which the scantiest experience of the human state can supply in every man's life a thousand, and ten thousand particulars in evidence: if these were conveyed to me in such a way, and in such a manner, that though I felt and enjoyed all the sweets of them, yet they came directed in an unknown hand, and from a quarter I did not know—should I not naturally inquire, to whom am I thus indebted? Where is this kind, this liberal, this generous Friend, that thus bountifully supplies all my wants unasked, and is thus unremittingly engaged in being before hand with me in blessings?

This is he, of whom I have all along been discoursing; it is Jesus! "the Friend that loveth at all times," concerning whom, as Job elegantly expresses it, "Behold, I go forward, he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him. On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him. He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him. But he knoweth the way that I take," Job xxiii. 8, 9, 10. This is he, who condescends to solicit the friendship of his people; though angels, and all the host of heaven, are his servants.

And now what saith the reader to this subject? What friendship will our youth desire, like the friendship of Jesus?

And do not suppose, that, in thus holding up to your view the loveliness of the Redeemer, as justly claiming the first place in your affections, that while your heart is open to him, it need be shut against any of the tender and interesting charities of earthly connections. It is not to rob you of these endearments, but his friendship will abundantly sweeten and refine them. Every friend, every relation of life, will be rendered yet more dear and valuable, when they are accepted as his gift, and sanctioned as his blessing.

Believe me, when I tell you, that I have my friends in life, as well as others, and very dear are they in my affection. I know how to appreciate their real value. But I have discovered, under the divine teachings, the unsatisfying return of all. I have long learnt that creature comforts of every kind are incompetent to satisfy the capacious desires of the soul. And, unless Jesus be my portion, none of them can fill those desires. He I find to be necessary, to give a true relish to all creature enjoyments, and to make up the want of all creature deficiencies.

Besides, the best of earthly friends are but earthly. I can, and do discover, imperfections in them, while I feel the same, or more, perhaps, in myself. And moreover, life is but as a narrow isthmus; the tides of time are making incursions daily, both upon them and upon myself; and the rafters of all our earthly tabernacles are loosening and giving away. Where then shall I look for friendship, in that hour when friendship is truly valuable, when the floods descend, and the winds blow, and the house of this frame be dissolved; unless this Almighty Friend be my friend, who loveth at all times, and who "having loved his own which were in the world, he loveth them to the end."

My youthful reader, I bid you farewell! May he, who hath appropriated to himself that glorious distinction of character, when he saith, "I am the Lord thy

God which teacheth thee to profit," Isa. xliii. 17. may he, from what you have read, give you such views of Jesus, and so incline your heart into the love of him, that, amidst all the friendships of life, your affections may correspond to one of old, in allusion to the Redeemer, "whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

## XXV.

### THE BROTHER BORN FOR ADVERSITY.

As a promising, intelligent youth, whom for distinction sake, we call William Strangeways, was returning one afternoon from school, in company with another fine boy, whom, for the same purpose, may be named John Fairchild; a circumstance occurred, which made a strong impression upon the mind of William.

The reader should be told, that these boys were near of an age, of similar manners, tempers, and pursuits; and had conceived a great partiality for each other.

William was the only child of his father, Mr. Strangeways, and lived at home with him. John Fairchild had lost both father and mother, but had been adopted by his elder brother, who happened by the gracious appointment of God, to have been arrived at the age of manhood, when his parents died; and what was yet more providential for his younger brother, was not only settled in life in easy circumstances, so as to be enabled to provide for his orphan brother, but a merciful predisposing God had given him an affectionate heart also, prompting him to the charity. So that, from the period of the parents' death, he had taken home his brother to his house, and brought him up as his own.

Reader! it is very sweet to trace the Lord's hand in all the Lord's appointments. The same power which took away John's father, raised him up another father in his brother. And in the very moment that the Lord was seemingly bereaving this child of his support, he was in reality providing for him. And this explains to us the sense of that precious scripture, and becomes,

indeed, the best commentary upon it: "when my father and mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up."

But to return—When those two youths were going from school, as hath been before observed, and were now arrived at the door of Mr. Fairchild's house, unwilling to separate, John expressed his wishes to his friend, that he would tarry with him and take tea.

There needed but little invitation to induce William to accept the proposal. But the brother's permission, on John's part, and the father's consent on William's, were first necessary to be obtained.

It so happened, that while the young friends were debating upon the subject, Mr. Fairchild came to the door. John saw him, and with that kind of confidence which nothing but real love can beget in the heart, he ran up to him, with William's hand inclosed in his own, and communicated to him the mutual object of their wishes. 'My dear brother, (said John) William Strangeways and I much wish to spend the evening together; and as our school exercises are finished, I am sure you will not say nay to our request.'

'That I certainly shall not,' answered the brother. 'But (interrupted William) my father's pleasure must first be known, before I can venture to stay.' 'That (replied Mr. Fairchild) I will undertake to know, in sending over a servant to him, with a request that you may be permitted to stay with us.'——This was accordingly done, and the servant soon returned with an answer, that Mr. Strangeways had no objection. The young friends very shortly after entered upon their evening's amusement.

It would be foreign to the purpose in view, to entertain the reader with an account of the several engagements which occupied their time and attention during the evening. It is the particular circumstance, which made a strong impression at this time on the mind of William, for which the reader's attention hath been

called forth to this trait of history, in these two boys. And this was no other, than the great affection which William remarked in the conduct of Mr. Fairchild towards his brother, and which arrested his attention so forcibly, that he lost sight, for the moment, of every thing beside.

William himself had no brother, neither indeed any other relation, his father excepted; so that the dear boy had never before been at all conscious of the relationship of brother, in all its train of happy consequences, where the affection is duly kept up and preserved. He could not therefore but notice, with a kind of rapture, the wonderful attention which the elder Mr. Fairchild shewed to his brother. It was but for John to propose any thing, and it was immediately granted. It is true, John had learnt to ask nothing improper. But Mr. Fairchild appeared as if he lived but to make him happy; and by his looks and expressions seemed as though he even studied to anticipate his wishes.

When the hour of separation for the young friends arrived, William returned home greatly delighted with his entertainment; but chiefly from the high respect which he had conceived for the elder Mr. Fairchild. And as William himself possessed a very tender and affectionate heart, the frequent term of brother, and dear brother, which we had heard echoed during the evening, from one to the other of the Fairchilds, dwelt so forcibly upon his mind, that he could not help repeating it to himself as he went, as if there had been a kind of charm in the very name.

In the frankness of his mind, he communicated to his father on his return, the kind reception he had met in his visit; and in a more particular manner he dwelt upon that part of his pleasure which had arisen in his mind, from beholding the affection of the brothers. And as Mr. Strangeways was the tenderest of fathers,

William felt no restraint in ending his narration of it, with a wish that he had such a brother as Mr. Fairchild. ‘ Not,’ added the generous boy, with a kind of half-blush upon his countenance as he said it, ‘ not that I can be said to need any other relation, while I have you, my dear father, whose tenderness makes up the want, and stands in the vacancy of every other. But you will not, I am sure, be offended with me when I observe, that from what I have remarked in the fraternal love of the Fairchilds, there is a certain somewhat in the affinity of brother, which doth not subsist between a child and its parent. I cannot allow myself, indeed I ought not, even in the tenderest moments of your affection towards me, to lose sight of that reverence which the very idea of the relationship between us begets. And there is a freedom, in a conscious brotherhood, which would be unsuitable and unbecoming, if shewn towards a father. I know not how to describe the difference,’ William added, ‘ but I think had it pleased God to have given me a brother, it would have greatly increased my happiness.’*

* If a reader of riper years than the youth here represented, should condescend to peruse this little book, and especially if such a reader should be well taught in divine things, may I not venture to ask, whether the principles of our most holy faith do not furnish out somewhat of the kind (but only in an infinitely higher degree) that is peculiarly interesting to dwell upon, in the contemplation of Jesus as the Brother of his people? Let it be recollected, that this relationship of Brother is peculiar to Jesus, among the persons of the Godhead. For though we are taught to look up to all the persons of the Godhead as equally concerned in the accomplishment of human redemption, and as such, equally entitled to our love and adoration; yet as neither the person of the Father, nor the Holy Ghost took upon them our nature, but Jesus only; so it is him, and him only, that we are authorized to call Brother. And is there not somewhat in the very name of brother, which tends to endear Jesus to the heart? Was it not a most gracious act of love and mercy in God our Father, when giving his only Son for the purpose of redemption, that he held him forth to us in this sweet character? As if in order to lessen the infinite distance between him and us, he not only sent tidings of salvation, but sent them in so precious a medium, as in the person of one in our own nature! And let the reader himself determine (for I am not competent to speak his feelings) whether he doth not find a greater confidence in this conscious relationship with the person of the Lord Jesus, when at any time he is drawing nigh the mercy-seat?

'I am much delighted, my sweet boy,' replied Mr. Strangeways, 'with your observations upon the subject of brotherly love. And as your mind seems to be so much enamoured with what you have seen and heard in the instance of Mr. Fairchild as a brother, I think I can propose one to you in this character, who is indeed in the same moment, both your brother and mine; and who so infinitely transcends every other, nay, every possible idea your mind is capable of forming, of what may be found in that relationship, as the sun's brightness surpasseth in splendour the faint star of midnight.'

William was at a loss to apprehend his father's meaning. He paused for a moment, and then said, 'what can you mean, my dear father? I do not understand you.' 'Then fetch the bible,' answered Mr. Strangeways, 'and I will explain.' William obeyed. When Mr. Strangeways had opened the sacred volume, he read these words in the Proverbs of Solomon, chap. xvii. 17. "A brother is born for adversity."

'Do you know, William,' said the father, 'of whom this is spoken?'—William hesitated—the father added, 'have you never observed, what is particularly said of him, under this character, of whom the sacred writer remarks, that "he verily took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham; therefore in all things it behoved him to made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High

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Surely the thought is inexpressibly sweet and encouraging, that he, in whose name, and in whose righteousness we approach, is our Brother. He, through whose hand all our blessings come, graciously condescends to admit of this relationship, and is not (we are expressly told) ashamed to call us brethren. I would not err, methinks, in a point of such consequence. But surely we may venture to hope that the relationship is there clearly revealed to us by way of comforting the hands of the faithful. And I cannot but conclude that God in great mercy hath opened to our view so very sweet and precious a thought, in order to call up the perpetual exercise of our intellectual faculties on a subject of endless pleasure and delight.

Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people?" So again; "Forasmuch," saith the same inspired author, "forasmuch then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, are all their life-time subject to bondage." So again; "For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." '

Mr. Strangeways paused, when he had read thus far, and looking earnestly at his son, said, 'does not my dear boy know who is thus described? Is it not the Lord Jesus? Of whom indeed, but him, could such things be said? and is he not then the "Brother born for adversity?" '

'But,' answered William, (and with apparently no small degree of surprise) 'have you not taught me to believe that Jesus is God?'

'Yes! most unquestionably,' replied his father; 'for Jesus, in his divine nature, is truly and properly God; possessed of all the essential and distinguishing perfections of the Godhead, being "one with the Father, over all, God blessed for ever." And I would not, (added he, and his countenance glowed as he said it, with all the fervour of animation) I would not relinquish the precious truth for a thousand worlds; on the certainty of which, my salvation and the salvation of millions depends.'

'But,' he continued, 'while I desire to cherish this assurance as an object of the first moment to my everlasting welfare, I desire also never to lose sight of this glorious truth—that he, who in his divine nature, is truly and properly God, is, in his human nature, as truly and properly man; for by the union of both, he

and he only, became qualified for the great work of redemption. And in the manhood of Jesus, there is such a sweetness and suitableness of relationship to endear him to the heart, as cannot but render him an object of unceasing love to all his people. It is the consciousness of this fellow feeling (if I may so call it) in Jesus, which begets confidence in the soul of a true believer, amidst the many discouragements of life. I go to him upon all occasions, as to one, who not only knows my frame, and remembers that I am but dust, but who hath felt all which that frame is capable of feeling, (sin only excepted) and therefore can and will feel for every situation to which my nature is exposed; and as the apostle speaks, and which he commands the people of God always to keep in remembrance, "he himself having suffered being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted."

'I presume, my dear child,' added Mr. Strangeways, 'that you have never been brought acquainted with the Lord Jesus, in this endearing part of his character—his manhood. You have not been taught concerning this "Brother born for adversity." And if this be the case, I can only tell you, that you have a pleasure yet to come, of the highest possible nature, to call up your love and praise in a never-ceasing source of happiness.'

'Do not then, my dear father,' replied William, 'delay that pleasure a moment. Tell me how, and in what way it is, that I am to consider the Lord Jesus as my Brother. For from what I have already learnt concerning his divine nature, and the unequalled love which he hath manifested in the accomplishment of our redemption, I have always found an argument sufficient to shew me, with what awakened love we ought to look up to him, as the Author and Finisher of salvation. But if, in his human nature, I have indeed real authority to behold him as my Brother also, I can at

once conceive that that relationship must infinitely exceed all the other connections of life.'

Mr. Strangeways observed in answer, that William's ideas were right. ' For,' added he, ' if the fact be so, that Jesus is our Brother, then it will follow, that he is in that affinity infinitely nearer than any other brother. For by virtue of that union and connection which the humanity of Jesus hath with the Godhead, our nature is thereby, universally considered, brought into a state of relationship with him, which no earthly tie can approach to. And when by the Spirit's gracious work, in any of the special instances of it, a soul is truly and properly united to Christ, there is then a relationship which nothing in nature can fully resemble; for " he that is joined unto the Lord (saith the word of God) is one spirit." '

' I am delighted,' said William, ' with the account you give me. Never before have I considered this most interesting of all subjects; neither did I know that I had such a Brother, and (as you first pointed him out to me) born for adversity. I am sure, I need not add a request (for you are always beforehand with me, in your desires to communicate information) that you will unfold to me, according to the scripture testimony of this precious doctrine, how Jesus is my Brother, and on what ground it is that I am authorized to call him so?'

Mr. Strangeways waited not for any further request, but begun—' Jesus is our Brother by nature, being truly and properly of " the seed of the woman." For when by his incarnation he assumed manhood, he became allied to us; or rather, more properly speaking, he took our nature into alliance with him; and hence became " bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh." " And we," as an apostle expresseth it, " are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

'And do not overlook, I beseech you,' said Mr. Strangeways, 'with what apparent delight the sacred writer speaks of this union, as distinguished from that of every other, in so near and intimate a relationship. "For verily," saith he, "he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham; for in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren." So that the highest order of beings is not brought into a connection so close as we are, with the blessed Jesus. And it is (added he) in my opinion, a thought worthy to be cherished with the warmest affection in the human mind, that the relationship which our nature hath with the person of the Lord Jesus, exalts that nature in the scale of existence, above that of angels. Nay, there is not an archangel, of the highest order, who can claim such affinity with the Son of God, as ourselves.

'What a sad reflection is it, that such multitudes of our poor fellow creatures are lost to a consciousness of this dignity, to which the Lord Jesus hath raised our fallen nature! Think, my dear child,' added Mr. Strangeways, 'what an evidence this is of our lost estate. But,' continued he, 'however sunk and degraded our nature is by the fall, so as to feel no conscious dignity in a thousand instances from this consideration, I can assure you, that whenever my heart is drawn out in the contemplation of it, it opens to my view such prospects as tend to brighten up all the dark shades around me, which arise out of our present state. I hardly feel my own poverty and wretchedness from the thought that I am interested in the "unsearchable riches of Christ;" neither doth my ignorance affect me with overwhelming distress, when I call to mind my union with him, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

'But the subject must not rest here. Besides this affinity in *nature*, into which we are brought with the

Lord Jesus, by virtue of his becoming incarnate, and by which he is truly and properly our Brother, there is a *spiritual* relationship also, to which we are begotten, from the same cause, and by which we are "heirs of God," as his children, and "joint heirs with Christ," as our Brother. This opens another interesting view of the subject, and is highly gratifying.

'The same authority by which we call Jesus Brother, allows us to call God Father; for he is our Father by adoption and grace. And he who condescends to be called our Father, is no less said to be the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And as far as an heavenly alliance and relationship must be supposed to transcend all earthly connections, by so much doth this nearness in spiritual affinity with God our heavenly Father, surpass the tie of an earthly parent.

'It is not a little gratifying to observe in the evidences of this truth, how strikingly the Lord Jesus hath authorized our claim to this spiritual affinity. When Christ, in the days of his flesh, was preaching before a mixed multitude of the people, one of the throng called to him to say, that "his mother and his brethren were without, desiring to speak with him." Jesus took occasion from hence to point out this spiritual relationship. Stretching forth his hand towards his disciples, he said, "Behold my mother, and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." And as if this were not enough, upon another occasion, even after he arose from the dead, he confirmed this doctrine yet more fully, in what he said to the woman at the sepulchre. "Go to my brethren, (said Jesus) and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

'Neither is this all. For if, in the common acceptation of the word, in life we call them brethren, who are engaged in one and the same interest and concern,

surely we may well call Jesus our Brother, who is engaged for us, and to us, and with us, in all the grand interests, both of time and eternity! Every thing that we have, or hope for, in both worlds, can only arise from our relationship to him. And moreover, if they are kindred souls, as really and truly they are, who are of one heart and one mind, and where a family feature runs through the whole, and decides their affinity; are not Jesus and his people, in this sense, brethren? He hath taken our nature, and they by his grace are conformed to his lovely image and likeness. He hath borne their sins and carried their sorrows; and they are interested in his righteousness, and have fellowship in his joy. He calls them his; and their language is, "My beloved is mine;" so that they feel towards him somewhat of Ruth's attachment to Naomi; when she said, "whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

'Now put all these considerations together, and then say, whether Jesus be not, in the sweetest and most precious sense of the word, the Brother of his people, and the Brother peculiarly "born for adversity?" For our nature was in the deepest and lowest state of adversity, when he became man, on purpose for our redemption. It was this brotherly love, which prompted him to be set up as our covenant head from all eternity. It was the same brotherly love which caused him to set down his name as engaged to be our Surety and Representative, to answer all the demands of God his Father's law; and both by doing and dying, to obtain our eternal redemption. It was the same brotherly love which carried him with delight and satisfaction through all the work, until every part of it was fulfilled. And what is it now but the same unchanged affection, by which he is gone to take possession of the promised

reward in our name ; and from whence, we are assured, he will come again, and receive all his brethren to himself, that where he is there they shall be also. Hail! thou Almighty Lord! thou art indeed our Brother, thou art the Judah whom thy brethren shall praise, and before whom thy Father's children shall bow down. Thine it is, dearest Jesus, through all the changing scenes of life, to prove thyself the " Brother born for adversity ;" and in death, and after death, to present thy brethren before God, and our Father, as thy brethren still, the gift of the Father's love, and the purchase of thine own blood. Then wilt thou say, " These are they whom thou gavest me out of the world ; thine they were and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word. Father, I will, that they may be with me where I am, to behold my glory." '

Mr. Strangeways paused a moment, and then added —' My dear son, (said the father) I shall much rejoice, if in your estimate of life, by comparative views of things, you learn to form a right judgment in a point of such infinite consequence as those which I have been speaking of. While you cherish every proper affection for all the amiable qualities you behold among men, let it be your study to draw that line of distinction which should ever be made between creature love and that which is divine. Jesus is the only Brother, properly speaking, born for adversity ; for to him, and him only, can that character be peculiarly ascribed. Of no other can it be said with any propriety, that a man's brother in the affinities of earthly connections, is born for adversity only. Indeed in the circumstances of human life, for the most part, the affectionate attachments are chiefly displayed when prosperous events abound. Summer friends, like summer flies, swarm only in sunshine. But Jesus is the Brother born peculiarly for adversity. For though in reality his affection never varies, yet the precious ef-

fects appear most to our view when adversity surrounds us. Jesus's smiles are better seen when all things beside frown.

'Besides,' continued Mr. Strangeways, 'no other love but that of Jesus is to be depended upon. The best of creature affection is but the affection of the creature; and what is that, but changeable, fickle, and inconstant! one thing to-day, another to-morrow. Love begets love; and the common interests and charities of life have their tie; but it is the distinguishing feature of his affection, of whom I speak, that "while we were enemies Christ died for us."

'Moreover, let it be supposed for argument's sake, that it was possible for one man to love another, even as his own soul; yet when the power and ability of creatures, such as we are, is taken into consideration, the value of human regard must be put down to a small account. There are a thousand situations of distress into which you or I may fall; and yet where the kindest friend or the most affectionate brother, taken from men, can only pity, and not relieve. But here, in an eminent degree, the Brother born for adversity appears suited to our case and circumstances; for his power is equal to his love, and both incapable of being circumscribed.

'Neither is this all. Brotherly affection among men, is, for the most part, shewn to the deserving. Jesus is the brother of the undeserving. It is his own love, not our merit, which is the standard of his mercy. And however we fall short in our regard to him, yet never, never, doth he fail in his love to us.

'And lastly, to mention no more. If we estimate the affection of earthly brethren at ever so high a rate, yet what is the sum total, when the short and dying state of a world like the present draws around us the line for calculation. A little arithmetic will give the

amount. But the affection of that Brother who is born for adversity, hath no bounds in time, neither in eternity itself will it ever be concluded. For as he is in his own nature, so is he in the unchangeableness of his affection to his people; "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." '

Reader! I know not what your relations or connections in life may be; but I earnestly recommend you to seek grace from God, that you may know Jesus as *your* Brother born for adversity. In this present life, such a relationship will sweeten every other, and tend to heighten all the ties of nature. In that world which is to come, it will be found the one thing needful. And think only what rapture will break in upon the soul, when all the universe is gathered together before God, and the Lord Jesus shall "come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in them that believe," if in that hour you be acknowledged by Jesus as his brother, which will be a Brother indeed born for adversity. May it be the happy portion of him that writes, and of him that reads, and then the end of both will be everlastingly happy.

## XXVI.

### THE PLANT OF RENOWN.

A gentleman in the West of England, having lately retired from a situation which he had long held, in one of the principal departments of the hospital, gave occasion thereby for the sale of his furniture. And as the curiosities of his garden had been the collection of many years, their disposal called forth a more than ordinary attention in the public mind.

At the pressing importunity of my youngest daughter, whose partiality for the productions of the greenhouse prompted her very much to see this collection, I was prevailed upon to accompany her to the house.

My mind was forcibly struck in beholding the earnestness which manifested itself in the countenances of many that were present during the sale; and in particular, when some of the foreign plants came under the auctioneer's hammer, such was the spirit of bidding, among the several amateurs of botany, as if the possession of an exotic became the one thing needful, and the great desideratum of life.

It was no less curious, also, to observe the self-importance assumed by several of the company, in the display of their supposed knowledge in the science of the plants. Had it been possible for Linnæus himself to have been present, his authority would not have proved sufficient, unopposed, to have classed the several articles, according to their respective genera, in the order of the vegetable kingdom. Every one affected to know the whole of the collection by name; and, like another Solomon, "could speak of trees, from the cedar of Lebanon, even to the hyssop which springeth out of the wall."*

* Kings iv. 33. Perhaps it may be no improper information to some of my younger readers, to tell them, that Linnæus was a Swede by birth, and allow-

An idea crossed my mind in the contemplation of what I saw and heard, that it would be a favourable moment for the sale of a plant, which the word of God speaks of with peculiar commendation of character, and holds forth in this light to general notice. And, under the impression, I felt myself, more than once, very strongly prompted to request the auctioneer that he would put up "the Plant of Renown;" but I suppressed the wish: upon second thoughts I recollected that it was but little known, and less regarded, to meet with many purchasers.

At my return home, however, the thought again recurred to my mind. I felt pain, I confess, in the reflection, that so much solicitude should discover itself in the human mind, for the possession of the short-lived, and unsatisfying productions of nature, while a total insensibility should uniformly mark the character towards all the departments of grace: and under this view of the subject, I was led to conceive that it would be a very laudable attempt, the endeavour to rescue the mind from such mistaken pursuits, by directing the attention into a more pleasing and profitable channel. It struck me, that a fair representation of the superiority of the divine sciences, could not fail, under God's blessing, to answer this purpose. And the more I contemplated the idea, the more the thought pleased me. It is possible (I said to myself) that some youthful mind, like my daughter's, may have a strong predilection for the amusements of the garden; and who can say, but what, if some of this description should be led to

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edly the first and greatest naturalist, in the whole science of botany. His system is, at this hour, the standard of decision in all controverted points. In his arrangement of botany, he hath divided the vegetable kingdom into twenty-four classes; these classes are again divided into 120 orders; these orders are farther divided into nearly 2,000 families; and lastly, these families, or genera, into about 20,000 species; to say nothing of the innumerable varieties, which arise out of the casual circumstances of climate or cultivation.

read my recommendation of the Plant of Renown, they may be convinced that this opens a subject, not barely of contemplation, or temporary pleasure, and frequently attended with disappointment; but of real and substantial good, accompanied with permament enjoyment, and liable to no interruption whatever.*

My youthful reader, (for it is peculiarly in reference to young minds that I send forth this little work) shall I solicit your attention to this subject? I am no enemy to the innocent amusements of the garden; I will very readily and cheerfully allow, that the green-house hath its charms, and is capable of affording a pleasing variety, both of improvement and gratification: but I must contend no less, it hath its disadvantages also. Independent of the transient and frequently unsatisfying nature of such pursuits, the over-attention of the

* It will not, I hope, be supposed, from any thing that is here advanced, that I am unfavourable to the study of the science of botany. I bless the Lord that I can enter into this department of the field of nature, with as much real enjoyment as any one. The Botanic Garden, and the Loves of the Plants, since Dr. Darwin undertook to 'enlist the imagination under the banner of science,' (as he terms it) are, in my esteem, very pleasing and interesting subjects, for the employment of a lighter hour. To trace the science through all its gradations, and mark the progress of vegetation, from the placentation of plants, through all their different forms, in the circulation of their blood, and respiration of their lungs, with all that variety of appearances which characterise their genera; nothing can be more admirably contrived to call up and to recompence the attention. I cheerfully join issue with the doctor in the sentiment, when he says, 'from this outline a philosopher may catch a glimpse of the general economy of nature; and like the mariner cast upon an unknown shore, who rejoiced when he saw the print of a human foot upon the sand, he may cry out with rapture, 'God dwells here.'' But still I think these subjects are only for a lighter hour. There is a vanity which marks them all. And it is beyond the circle of mutable perishing objects, that real happiness and enjoyment must be found. When from effects we rise to the first great cause; and from the world of nature we follow Jesus into the path of grace; when the view, or study of the plant, prompts the soul to contemplate him who made them what they are; who redeemed them to us, when by sin the earth would of itself bring forth nothing but thorns and thistles; who now upholds them with his power, and gives to them all their fragrancy, fruits and sweetness, for our enjoyment. To eye Jesus in this way, and thus to be led "from nature up to nature's God," this is blending the best and truest philosophy, with the best and truest religion; and passing through the outer courts of God's world into the inner sanctuary of his temple.

mind to these things, opens a source of perpetual mortification. All the fond hopes of long care and assiduity a single night may blast; a worm may gnaw the root of the sweetest flower; the sun may scorch, the frost nip, or the rain wash away, the whole labours of the garden; but neither sun, nor frost, nor worm, nor rain, nor all the ravages of time, can in the least injure or efface the Plant of Renown. And shall not so vast a superiority, in point of importance and of value, call forth, as it most evidently demands, a superiority of attention?

Shall I ask you, "what is the general assemblage of qualities, which in your esteem would constitute an object truly lovely and desirable, in the productions of the green-house? Would you not include in it beauty of form, colour, verdure, foilage, fruitfulness, fragrancy, and the like? All these, then, with every other grace, which can tend to form a perfection of character, are found eminently displayed in the "Plant of Renown."

He is the "Rose of Sharon" for majesty; and the "Lily of the Valley" for beauty and sweetness.* His

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* My youthful reader will not be offended, I hope, though I detain him to remark, what a beautiful similitude the sacred writer here makes use of, in his description of Jesus. "The Rose of Sharon," no doubt, exceeded every other in superiority, as the place itself was remarkable for its fruitfulness in pasture, to the innumerable flocks which grazed on its plains. Its situation was lovely, for it lay between Cæsarea and Joppa, on that part near to the Mediterranean Sea. Jewish writers have described it as abounding with fruits and flowers in great luxuriancy, both in the gardens and fields.

"The Rose of Sharon," in its redness, became no unapt representation of the human nature of Jesus. For as an apostle saith, "forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same," Heb. ii. 14. And when we add to this idea, the bloody sufferings of Jesus, the blushing hue of the red rose surely may be considered as a lovely figure of his spotless nature tinged with blood.

And the snowy colour of the lily, as beautfully describes the holiness, and unsullied purity of Jesus. He was indeed, as the same apostle paints him, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," Heb. vii. 26.

And from the union of both, we cannot have a finer instance of the most finished imagery, in representing the two natures of Jesus, the human and di-

fragrancy like the spices of the pomegranate, smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; his verdure is ever green, like the fir-tree, which never casts her leaf, and whose branches do not wither. No plant can bear the smallest resemblance for fruitfulness to the "Plant of Renown;" for he is the tree of life, on either side the river, in the paradise of God, which bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month; the leaves whereof are truly medicinal for the healing of the nations.

And what tends infinitely to enhance and recommend this sweet plant to the approbation and delight of every beholder, is the extensiveness of it. Not confined to age, climate, or to season, soil, or country; he hath flourished from everlasting, and in all periods of the world, having neither beginning of days nor end of life. Nay, more than this; alike incapable of injury or improvement, from any outward cause, "the Plant of Renown" grows in the open field, as much as in the enclosure of the garden. And although, like the unobserved flower of the mountain, this precious plant is too frequently overlooked, and only regarded by the few, who know its value, this first, and best, and sweetest of all productions, is altogether free and spontaneous; similar to what is said in holy writ of the dew of heaven, "which tarrieth not for man, neither waiteth for the sons of men," Micah v. 7.

And, as if this was not enough to recommend him to the universal love and affection of mankind, what becomes so truly endearing concerning him, is the consideration, that the whole of his precious qualities, and every thing in him, is so diffusive. Most glorious

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vine; and in which the church herself beholds him, when she saith in a transport of holy admiration and joy, "my beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand," Song v. 10.

as he is in himself, independent of all other circumstances, it is not for himself that he lives and flourishes, he is not like the shrubs of the desert, which scattereth her blossoms amidst the unconscious air, and her fruit to the wind; but, like the wide-spreading tree of the plain, the hungry have blessed him for his fruit, and the traveller for his shelter; thousands, and tens of thousands, of all nations, kindreds, and climes, have "sat under his shadow with great delight; and his fruit hath been sweet to their taste."

Will not every one confess, that such a plant, so infinitely transcending all the productions of nature, must alone challenge attention, and become the only object worthy of affection in the human mind?

Perhaps the reader is by this time prompted to suspect, that somewhat more is folded up under this title-page, than a plant, and that it is a similitude meant to convey the image of a person, peculiarly beautiful and lovely.

If the reader, from what hath been brought before him, be led to this conclusion, he will not greatly err: it is indeed Jesus, of whom I speak; whose endearing character, the Holy Ghost hath been pleased to describe, under the metaphor of a "Plant of Renown."

It is highly gratifying to observe how very attentive the blessed Spirit hath been in his precious office of glorifying Jesus; in bringing him forward to the view and contemplation of his people, under the great variety of representations the word of God abounds with, to this purpose. He seeems to have explored all the resources, both of art and nature, in order to sketch to our apprehensions, and as familiarly as possible, the sweet and engaging features of the Lord Jesus. Every similitude which the imagination can conceive to be lovely, is adapted to represent the perfect loveliness of Jesus. And we are sent both to the field and to the

garden, to the most fascinating beauties of real and imaginary life, in order to form suitable ideas of him, who is the altogether lovely, and the fairest among ten thousand.

But there is an uncommon degree of elegance, as well as propriety, in the figure of the "Plant of Renown," which peculiarly marks it for Jesus's own, since it could not, with justness, be applied to any other. The humbleness of the Redeemer's character could have its obscurity represented by no image more suited to it, than that of a plant; and, at the same time, the illustrious glories of the Godhead, which shone forth through the manhood, are admirably set forth in the united character of the "Plant of Renown."

If the youthful reader will consult his bible, in that part of it which contains the prophecies of Ezekiel, Ezek. xxxiv. 29. he will find that God the Father promised the church to raise up for them a "Plant of Renown." And if, after the perusal of the promise, the reader will attend to the prominent features in the life of Jesus, when he manifested himself in substance of our nature; he will then be enabled to judge for himself, whether the whole appearance and ministry of the Redeemer did not correspond to this appellation.

Deep-rooted in eternity, the Son of God must be considered as self-existing and underived; with the greatest justice therefore, he is called a Plant; for as in the formation of plants in the natural world, there is nothing of human art or human contrivance in giving existence to the several productions of nature, so in this unequalled instance of grace, in the formation of this Plant in the spiritual, it is "not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord:" as one of the prophets described his generation, he "grew up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground."

Nothing can be more interesting than to trace the

subject of his history under this similitude; and to behold how all the corresponding features in his person and ministry answered to it.

As a plant, Jesus might truly be said to be deep-rooted in the ancient and eternal purposes of the divine counsel; as he said himself, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old: I was set up from everlasting."

And as truly might the Son of God be said to be planted in the earth, when, by the assumption of our nature, he became man for the purposes of salvation.

And is not Jesus yet more immediately planted by the Holy Ghost, personally in the heart of his people, when by his quickening power he is formed there, "the hope of glory?"

Thus, all the persons of the Godhead have set to their seal, of the infinite propriety of the similitude, when describing the Lord Jesus under this character of the loveliest flower of the field. And when the analogy of his people's faith and experience bears testimony to the same, in their knowledge of him under this feature, doth not a conscious union with his person bring up after it as conscious an evidence of an interest in him, and confirm the apostle's doctrine, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

It is hardly necessary to add, that in the triumph of the Lord Jesus over death and the grave, his resurrection is declared to be as the revival of the plants, after a wintry dispensation; and so it shall be to his people; for so the prophet speaks: "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead."*

* Isa. xxvi. 19. No figure or similitude could have been more happily adopted by way of illustrating the doctrine of the resurrection, than what is here chosen of the dew of herbs.

But it is not enough to contemplate the Lord Jesus as a Plant only; we must join with it that other part of his character, and consider him as a "Plant of Renown;" and in what a series of the most illustrious events hath he been renowned, in all ages, throughout the earth; and will continue to be so to all eternity! Here, indeed, it is, that he is so eminently distinguished. He is said to be "the desire of all nations. Men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed."

In the wonderful and mysterious union of the nature of the Godhead with the manhood, what an object of renown is he, amidst the blessed above, and the church militant here below! In the glories of his mediatorial character, as the only daysman between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, what everlasting renown hath he acquired, in the exercise of this precious, precious office? In the greatness, fitness, fulness, suitableness, and extensiveness of his salvation, what eternal praises are his due in the recovery of our fallen nature? And in the preaching of the glorious gospel, and when that gospel is rendered effectual by the Holy Ghost, in

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It is well known, that, after a hot scorching day, when the earth is parched, and the herbs of the field look not barely withered, but as though they were really dead; the dew (and which by the way it should be observed, falls in exact proportion to the heat) distils in such refreshing showers, that (to use another scripture metaphor equally beautiful) the several plants "revive as the corn, and grow as the vine," Hosea xiv. 7.

Now (saith the sacred writer) the renovating influence of the resurrection of Jesus, on the bodies of his saints, shall have such sovereign efficacy, that, like the dews of herbs, the earth shall cast out her dead, similar to the new buddings which, from the dried root, are pushed forth with all the vigour of a new nature.

Whether we consider this interesting doctrine in reference to the resurrection of grace here, or glory hereafter, or indeed both, (for perhaps it hath an allusion to each) the subject is equally beautiful and interesting. And no doubt, from the well-known union which true believers in Jesus have with him, their glorious head, the certainty of their resurrection is confirmed. They must partake in his triumph over the grave. He hath said, and the fact is undeniable in the evidence of his own resurrection, "because I live, ye shall live also," John xiv. 19.

turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan to the living God; what a crown of glory is put upon the Redeemer's head, as the renown of all his gracious undertaking!

Let that poor sinner say, for description fails me to declare, what praise is his due, who hath snatched him as a brand from the burning; or let the millions now in glory, who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; let these tell us how dear his name, how renowned his grace, how precious his person, how suited his righteousness!

Hail! thou Eternal Plant of never-fading renown! may my soul gaze for ever on thy beauties, and live upon thy fulness! And while thou art at once the object of unceasing delight, in thy Father's view, angels' esteem, and thy people's love, Oh! be thou to me the sum and substance of all my joy, in time and to all eternity. To thee may every knee bow, and every tongue confess that thou art Jesus Christ the Lord, to the glory of God the Father!

And now let the reader determine for himself (for to the decision of his own mind I appeal)—is there an object in the universe, which comes home with so much preciousness of character, to call up the warmest affection of the human heart, as this "Plant of Renown?" Is there a study, in all the sciences of life, like the study of him "whom (as the scripture beautifully and most engagingly describes him) to know, is life eternal?" And if so, who that is truly wise, or desirous of being truly happy, but above all pursuits and attainments, would cultivate an acquaintance with him, who is the first fair, the first glorious, the first excellent of all beings, and comprehending in himself all that is worthy of renown, in heaven and in earth.

I know not what particular study or pursuit the youthful reader's mind may be inclined to, but this I know, that, in the knowledge of Jesus, the real relish and

enjoyment of every other is included; for he himself is comprehensive of every other. Creature pleasures, of every kind, are incompetent in themselves to afford true and solid comfort; for, beside the vanity and disappointment which, for the most part, attend the whole, they do not, they cannot indeed, in their very nature, and in all their variety and multiform appearances, convey any lasting satisfaction to the heart: there is a something wanting to give a zest and relish to them all; and that want is Jesus.

Young man! (if, perchance, these lines appear before one of that class) let me, at least, prevail so far with you as to give me credit for the possibility of the truth of what I say. And, when I have gained your suffrage to the possibility of the thing itself, suffer me to lead you one step farther in the question, and to admit the probability of it also. And, under these circumstances, I should venture to persuade myself, that the natural desire of promoting your own real happiness would cause you to exercise a becoming jealousy over every pursuit in life, however harmless or interesting soever the thing may be in itself, that hath not for its principal and ultimate object Jesus in view.

Perhaps in the whole circle of sciences, none can be less exceptionable, because none is less harmless, than the study of the botanic garden; but even here, as in human life itself, so in this department of one of the principal sweeteners of life, a wintry dispensation must come; and when it comes, it must invade and desolate the most promising prospect. But it is the prominent feature of him, who is the "Plant of Renown," that, amidst the perishing nature of all things around, "He is the same, and his years cannot fail." In the recollection of this, how doth all the loveliness of all earthly flowers languish, and the durableness of every perennial die away. Eden itself appears but as a desert.

Reader, farewell! May he that first raised up to his people this "Plant of Renown," now, by the influences of his Holy Spirit, raise him up in your affections, and give him glory in your heart. May he be renowned to your view, in the beauties of his person, nature, offices, character, and relations, during your day of grace, in the present preliminary state of things around. May he be growingly precious in your esteem, and you become more and more acquainted with him in your progress through this world to the other; and, at last, in that tremendous hour, when God the Father, who raised him up as a "Plant of Renown for the healing of the nations," shall raise him up to judge the world in righteousness, may a long, well-formed, and well-grounded intimacy and communion with him, as the Lord your righteousness here below, give you an holy confidence above, that, amidst the innumerable assembly of angels and of men, you may hail him with everlasting renown as the God of your salvation, for ever and ever.

## XXVII.

### THE ASYLUM FOR FEMALE PENITENTS.

It was a very lovely morning, and the sun had risen on the earth with his usual benignity, making all things fresh and gay. It brought to my recollection what one of our poets observed :—

> ——— Sweet is the breath of morn,
> Her rising sweet, with charms of earliest birds.—MILTON.

The morning was lovely to my view ; but it did not immediately strike me, that to many a sick and sorrowful eye, the gladdening rays of the sun had lost their brightness.

How unconscious is the mind of him that is at ease, with what numberless head-aches and heart-aches the world is teeming, morning by morning! How little do we think of the misery of others when our own situation is prosperous! Would it not be profitable at all seasons, and especially in our happiest seasons, to call to mind what numberless sorrows are at that moment endured throughout the earth?—would it not tend to heighten our mercies, and to induce a proper apprehension of their distinguished nature, in the recollection of the wants of others?—and, above all, might not our ungrateful hearts, in the consciousness of such distinguishing blessings, be sometimes compelled to look beyond second causes, and find a double relish in every enjoyment, from tracing a first, gracious, and kind hand, as the Sovereign Disposer of all?

I was ruminating on subjects of this nature, induced by the loveliness of the morning, when a poor woman, in deep distress (as if in confirmation of my morning thoughts) knocked at my door with great impatience and importunity. Her business was urgent indeed;

for she came on an errand of mercy. There needed no apology for the abruptness of her visit; though upon her entrance, (for she waited not the ceremony of introduction, the moment the door was opened) I was at a loss to explain for a while the occasion of it.

As soon as she found utterance, (for grief had choked the powers of speech some little time) her tale of woe not only explained the cause of her visit, but compelled the feelings to take interest in what she related.

She was a poor defenceless widow, the mother of an only daughter. Her child had been seduced from her, even before she had the consciousness of any danger; and for fifteen months, she had not only lost her, but, notwithstanding all the vigilance of the most anxious inquiry, she had never been able to trace her steps, so as to discover her abode among any of the haunts of sin and wretchedness. This morning, it seems, in which she knocked at my door, a letter sent from the poor deluded creature herself, gave the first information where she was; and the other contents of the sorrowful epistle were filled in terms not much unlike the prophet's roll, " lamentation, and mourning, and woe!"

In the first impulse of the moment, the distracted mother ran with the tidings to me; and on gaining entrance at the door, as before related, she put the letter into my hand; and, as if I was at once perfectly apprized of the whole contents, she cried out as she gave it me, ' And will you not take my poor ruined child from her horrible situation?'

There is a certain persuasive eloquence in the view of misery, which infinitely outruns all the powers of language; and seems as if it needed not the aid of words to plead its cause. He who gave it, well knew the frame of the human heart, which he had formed to feel its power; and he who gave it, well knew also how it should operate; and made effectual provision that it should not operate in vain. I know not how to de-

scribe it, neither indeed is it necessary. Every heart of sensibility will require no other glossary than what passeth within, very fully to explain.

I am more and more convinced, every day I live, that among the felicities of heaven, this intuitive communication from spirit to spirit, will form a part, and perhaps supersede, in some measure, the necessity of language: and if, in the present unripe state of being, we possess a faculty of conveying our thoughts and wishes one to another without the help of speech, what may not be expected of enjoyment in this particular, when our intellectual powers shall have attained a maturity of perfection?

I will instantly go with you, said I to the weeping mother; and we will fetch home the wretched wanderer. You shall take her again to your arms, and she shall lie in your arms, and she shall lie in your bosom, and be unto you still a daughter; and, under the blessing of God, reforming her heart, and correcting her from the error of her ways, like another prodigal spoken of elsewhere, you shall say of her as that parent is described to have said concerning his—"This my child was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found," Luke xv. 1—32. I felt a warmth of sympathy as I spake. Indeed, indeed, I recollected at the moment, what is said of Thee, thou loveliest and brightest of all patterns of mercy! Yes, blessed Jesus! I call to mind thine unequalled grace, when thou camest from thine home in heaven, to seek our poor nature lost here upon earth! And thine own gracious words crossed my memory in the view: "Thus saith the Lord God, behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. And I will deliver them out of all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away; and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick," Ezek. xxxiv. 11—16. Precious

Lord! what an endearment doth such a view of thy mercy to our poor nature give, to add to all the other features of thy lovely character!

I shall not offend, I hope, (if these lines should, perchance, fall under the eye of some parent, or master, or mistress of a family) should I venture to remark, how very different, in numberless instances, is this conduct of Jesus from our's. Do we not, sometimes, by unkind and rigorous treatment, aid the temptation which is perpetually in exercise upon the virtue of our female children and servants? Have not many been prompted to listen to the artful insinuations of young men, the more readily to get free from the shackles of too severe a government? And in cases where poor females have made a false step, have not many rash and unforgiving parents and masters too often prevented a return, by shutting the door against them when they would have returned? as if, by that one act, which an artless, unsuspecting young creature hath been betrayed into, and perhaps, after long deep-laid schemes of an unprincipled villain, she was no longer meriting shelter or protection? What resemblance is here to Jesus! He came in quest of wanderers, strangers, and enemies to him by wicked works!—and we shut the door to our own offspring, when seeking forgiveness? What a mercy it is to our whole race, that when it was universally found wandering from God, it was not left and turned out to perish for ever! What a mercy was it to my poor soul, that he sought me when I sought him not! and not only gave me the opportunity to return, but inclined my heart to return, by overcoming the natural enmity of my nature! And what a mercy is it to every poor lamb of his fold, that he will not leave it to be the prey of the destroyer, but will seek and search it out, and bring it home in his arms, though left more than half dead by the great enemy of souls!

Let parents, and masters, and mistresses bear with me while I add, that it should be with all that are entrusted with the spiritual guardianship of the young females of their families, a very solemn consideration of the inquiry, whether many are not drawn into prostitution from such causes, which might, by a contrary treatment, have been recovered from the first evil of seduction! and however faulty, in the first instance, the young woman may herself have been, yet, in the case where no pains afterwards are taken for her recovery, and, still worse than this, where her return is forbidden when she would have returned, and the home where she might have found shelter for repentance is shut against her; surely it must strike every thinking mind, that besides the unnatural cruelty of the act, there is attached to it, moreover, an awful responsibility to follow; and every renewed transgression of the poor excluded female, must fall at the parents' or master's door, with all the train of involved consequences which follow, in the everlasting ruin of both soul and body!

But these observations, let them be within a parenthesis, though I hope not an unprofitable one, if the Lord shall bless it.

I hastened with the poor mother to the place mentioned in her daughter's letter; and Oh, what a place it was! Oh, could our youth, which frequent such brothels, and under the false and meretricious glare of midnight revelling, fancy they know not what of joy; could they but see the sad faces of the morning, and behold the wretchedness of the scene which the day-light presents in view, how would they flee such haunts of filth and sin, instead of pursuing them!

As I entered the door, and passed through one of the apartments, in quest of the particular object of our search, my mind felt somewhat not unsimilar to what our first father is described by the poet to have been

exercised with, when the angel presented to his view the hospital of human woe, which was to be opened in the after circumstances of mankind:—

> ' . . . Immediately a place
> Before his eyes appeared; sad, noisome, dark,
> A lazar-house, it seem'd: wherein were laid
> Numbers of all diseased, all maladies.
> * * * * * * * * * * * *
> Sight to deform, what heart of rock could long
> Dry-eyed behold? . . . Compassion quell'd
> His best of man, and gave him up to tears.'—MILTON.

Every object I met, carried with it, to my view, somewhat of a suspicious nature. The very atmosphere of the place seemed contaminated, as though formed only for the polluted to inhabit. Those walls (I said to myself) could they speak, what scenes would they unfold, which they have been compelled to witness!

Several of the ruined inhabitants passed before me as I went through one of the apartments. I was constrained to reflection as I beheld them. There is somewhat so truly affecting in the sight, that it must argue, in my apprehension, a culpable insensibility not to take part in what concerns the common ruin of our nature. To see a young woman given up to the very reverse of that inmate modesty, designed to form the female character, and all the tenderness, retirement, and blushing loveliness which tend to endear her to the heart, totally relinquished, and in their place a boldness foreign to the very nature of her sex, manifesting itself in every part of her conduct, such views cannot fail to arrest all the charities of the mind, even when considered only in relation to the concerns of the present life; but when the momentous objects of another state come to be connected with the prospect—when the thought crosseth the mind, that beings designed for happiness, by this inversion of all that is amiable, are brought into a situation full of all that is miserable; and a life of sorrow,

disgrace, and infamy, is followed with an existence yet far more deplorable—the heart melts in the review, and every energy of the soul wishes to go forth in the prevention of such accumulated evil. It is a circumstance perhaps but little known, but yet too true, that by far the greater part of those miserable outcasts of society die at an earlier period than that in which multitudes begin to enter into life. Few of them attain their thirtieth year; but, like the horses of the team, unmercifully worked to death by their unfeeling owners, they fall a sacrifice to the dreadful effects of disease and intemperance; and die as they lived—unpitied, unnoticed, and unknown!

Never did I before feel, in an equal degree, the force of the prophet's question—"Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" Mal. ii. 10. And never did the appeal of the apostle come home with more energy to my heart, "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" 1 Cor. iv. 7.

I felt my mind led forth in the exercise of compassion still further, from considering how many and various the predisposing causes are, which, in numberless instances, occasion the ruin of young females! Added to the inexperience of their youth, common to all, it is more than probable that many have been totally void of any religious education. Some from the early loss of parents, others from the negligence of parents, and others from the cruelty of parents, fall victims to the snare of the deceiver; and what a train of various temptations, corresponding with the various dispositions of the human mind, and the different objects with which it is captivated, arise from the love of dress, amusements, novel-reading, play-houses, dancing, and the like!

Oh, ye happy female children of gracious parents, whom a bountiful God, in his gracious providence hath given to watch over and guard your younger years, (if

these lines should, by his appointment, fall under your eye) allow me to remind you of your privileges; and in the recollection of your mercies, may your hearts be directed to a just appreciation of their value, in thankfulness to the Author, in commiserating the state of those who are not so happily circumstanced! It is impossible, indeed, fully to calculate the distinguishing love of God in his appointments of preventing and restraining grace; but their blessed effects never appear more illustrious than in the contrast of chastity and uncleanness. Could your imagination but represent the horrid features, which for the most part mark the whole character of the Magdalene, how would all the tender feelings of your minds be called forth in pity towards such! And if it could be supposed (as it may very well be supposed, without the smallest impeachment of character) that the discountenance of places of amusement, and the discouragement of the novel publications of the day, which tend to corrupt the female mind; nay, that the very simplicity and chastity of dress, were more attended to by our virtuous and amiable young women, the example would be followed with the most beneficial consequences among those who are for ever attempting an imitation of the great; and thereby shut up some of the avenues which, in their lower circumstances, become the helps to seduction? In short, if there be a method in all the plans of conduct by which the unsullied graces of our young women can minister to prevent the loss of chastity on one of their own sex, or, where that loss cannot be prevented, to raise up any when fallen, how shall a sense of divine love or human affection be more gracefully shewn than in such acts of mercy? Might not an angel be supposed commissioned to do so much good, though that angel in his own nature could never be liable to a participation in such misery?

I have long and often lamented that unaccountable

backwardness in administering reproof, where the cases which demand it are open and glaring; but I never found more cause to blush on this account, than in the morning of visiting this wretched house; the inhabitants of it made me feel the culpable timidity most sensibly. Pardon, gracious God, the repeated omissions! and do ye forgive me also, among whom, in the neglect of the past, I have for ever lost the opportunity of being useful! But with what unblushing confidence do the sinners that I met in this haunt of licentiousness, communicate to one another their sentiments, and proclaim the service in which they are engaged:—here was no restraint—no reserve! Nay, a kind of triumph, as if in love with their chains. "Hardened," as scripture terms it, "through the deceitfulness of sin, and having their conscience seared with a hot iron."

But where is the master or mistress of the scene? Methinks I should like to speak to them. Have you considered the ultimate gain of such a traffic? Not simply the loss of every thing that is truly valuable in this life, but in that which is to come? Is it not what scripture calls "the blood of souls?" And would any one for the trifling, contemptible profit of the world, thus live, and thus die?—and this not simply as it concerns yourselves, but others; not the individual, but the many; not running into evil alone, but dragging into its vortex all around; and while "knowing the judgment of God, that they who do such things are worthy of death—not only do such things, but take pleasure in them that do them?"

We at length arrived (the poor afflicted mother and myself) at the sick room of her poor child. She was sitting by a miserable fire, in a room marked with as much misery as need be; and every thing around alike indicated the wretchedness of the inhabitant. Her sickness preyed upon her too much to leave her alive

to the full feelings, which her mother's presence and her own conscious heart would, no doubt, otherwise have called forth. Tenderness and affection, on the part of the poor old woman, was all that, in the present state, could be shewn; and the object I had to accomplish, was to adopt the speediest method for her removal.

But it was impossible, in rescuing one unhappy female from such a state of complicated misery, to behold the many left behind to perish; nay, to recollect the thousands continually hurried into this whirlpool of iniquity, but with the most painful sensation. The asylum for the reception of such poor deluded outcasts appeared in all its loveliness to my mind! Indeed, it were most devoutly to be wished, that its ability of admission within its hospitable walls were equal to all the wants of the multitudes that are perishing without; and like the city of the ransomed which is above, the asylum for the miserable below had "the gates of it never shut, day nor night."

So many strong and irresistible arguments unitedly concur for the universal protection of a charity replete with so much good, that it may reasonably be expected, every hand will be stretched forth to the support of it. I think the parents of young men must rejoice in the prospect, if by such means those nightly street-walkers were removed, who go forth full of disease and corruption to allure the unwary youth to ruin; and I conceive also, that the mothers of our young ladies would feel joy in the hope that the offences continually offered to the eyes and ears of their daughters, in the unchastity of dress, (not to say almost nakedness) in which those immodest women appear; and the language not unfrequently uttered by them as they pass, would be done away. And who shall calculate the general cause of delight in the breast of every feeling mind,

in bringing back the lost to society, and becoming instrumental in the hand of God to the salvation of their souls!

The asylum can never merit, in a single instance, an indignant eye; for it never was intended, neither can it be said in truth to minister to the encouragement of that sin, which it is its great object to prevent! It is to open a door of refuge to shelter the miserable creature from her infamy; and by providing for immediate want, to do away the dreadful necessity of continued prostitution, which multitudes, whose hearts revolt at the deed, are yet nevertheless constrained to pursue for their daily support. Let any man figure to himself a poor broken-hearted female of this description, with a mind deeply smitten with the feeling of her situation and misery—longing to escape from a life of such infamy, but void of all resources of friends or maintenance to accomplish it;—let him only fancy such a case (and there are multitudes to realize the picture) and then let him say, whether he would not feel joy that there is an asylum open to receive her?

## XXVIII.

### THE PENITENTIARY.

I will suppose myself meeting at the door of the Penitentiary a poor female penitent—I welcome her to this house of mercy, and putting this little tract into her hand, I say, 'sit down, my poor child, in some retired hour when no eye seeth you but his "who seeth in secret," and read over the contents. And may the same gracious Lord who led me, I hope, to write it, give you grace to read it; that it may minister in his Almighty hand to his glory, and to your present and everlasting welfare in Jesus Christ!'

And here, at your very entrance on the threshold of this asylum, I would beg of you to pause, and consider who it was that prompted you to come here? or by what means you were directed hither?

Perhaps some friend advised you. Be it so. But who put it into the mind of that friend so to advise? or when advising, what was it inclined your heart to listen to that advice? Perhaps your own feelings, unadvised by any other; or sickness, distress, or want, inclined your heart to seek this shelter; tired of the wretched and miserable way of life you was in, necessity seemed to compel to it.—But pause here again, and inquire 'who gave you those feelings? Who induced that sickness? Who sent that want, or distress, and made these causes minister now, more than before, to make you weary of a life of sin, and compelled you to seek deliverance from it?'

Go one step further in this inquiry. Who was it prompted the minds of the governors of this charity to open such a retreat to misery; and in your instance particularly, led them to receive you into their bosom, while others in a similar situation do not always find

it? Is it not all of the Lord? Do you not see the hand of a gracious God in the whole appointment? Was it not he indeed that sent sickness, or trouble, or want, or sorrow, into your circumstances? Made your way of life a burden to you, and allowed you no kind friend to lean upon the bosom of, but put thorns into your pillow, that you might feel their wounding: and when inclining your heart to seek admission here, inclined at the same time the heart of those who govern here to receive you? Are not these among the causes for which you come? Can you not trace marks of divine love and mercy in the appointment? Is it not indeed, as if you heard the Lord's voice saying, 'I will send sickness after this poor child of mine, that hath been so long wandering from me. I will damp all her pleasures; make her tired of her sinful course of life; hedge up her way with thorns; and bring her down to the deep waters of trouble. And when I have softened her heart with affliction, and prepared her for mercy, I will open an house of mercy to receive her.' Say, my poor child! may not this be the case? Is it not likely that the Lord's hand is in all this? Do you not find somewhat to encourage you to hope that his hand is in it?

Pause here again. And if upon serious consideration you really feel a rising hope that it is so, will you not mark it down in the memorandums of your mind, and cherish it with the greatest fondness in your heart, that the Lord designs mercy in bringing you here, and will certainly cause a blessing to follow in your coming here! Were I you, methinks, in such a review as this, I should say, 'surely if the Lord whom I knew not, nor regarded, thus thought upon me in my sin and misery, when I thought nothing of him, and directed my feet to this house of mercy, when I was unconscious what mercy I needed, and never but for his grace inclining me, should have sought it, shall I not be

encouraged to hope that if his grace sent me here, he will meet me and bless me here? If when my heart was harder than a stone, the Lord regarded me with pity, will he not continue that pity when my heart is softened by his grace? Did he look upon me in love when I looked not to him, nor regarded his favour; will he cast me off now, when I look up to his mercy-seat, and am seeking both?'

Pause once again, my poor child, over these things. And may the Lord prompt you to hope that your coming to this house of mercy is of the Lord's disposing: and take confidence from it, that he who hath thus disposed to the means, will bless to the end, in making you a rich partaker of his grace, to the enjoyment of all mercies in Jesus; in the blessings of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

When your mind is suitably impressed with a full conviction of this great leading point as it concerns the divine government, and especially in such marks of the Lord's love and grace as have been over you, I would next call upon you, my poor child, to another consideration connected with the former. I beg of you to consider what a mercy it must be to be brought within the walls of this peaceable dwelling. Here you find an asylum from numberless evils to which you were before exposed. That dreadful way of life you were in, will now no longer harass you. Here no worthless, unprincipled man, can enter to lead you again into the paths of sin. Here no wants are upon you to compel you to do what no doubt, in many instances, your mind hath often revolted at. Here you will be no longer subject to the tyranny of those awful characters who traffic in

* By way of strengthening such pleasing thoughts as arise out of this view of God's appointments, I would recommend the female penitent to those portions of scripture which confirm the doctrine. Such as the Lord's dealings with the patriarch Jacob, Gen. xxviii. Also the Lord's grace to Manassch, 2 Chron. xxxiii. The parable of the Prodigal, Luke xv.

soul destruction, in making your shame, in the prostitution of your body, subservient to their worldly gain.

Pause again, my poor child, over this state of happiness to which, by your admission into our penitentiary, you are brought. Look back, and behold the dreadful whirlpool from whence the arm of the Lord hath snatched you. And like the sailors escaped the storm, behold the wreck in which thousands (and some with whom you have been lately in the same danger together) are now sinking. Recollect what your own feelings sometimes were when you was in it; and say, is not that scripture a just description of it where it is said, "destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes," Rom. iii. 16, 17. Oh! think, solemnly think, what ere long would have been your portion had not the Lord sent you here! think what numbers of those poor unhappy females, your late companions in sin, die every year in this most alarming situation; and go down to the grave unpitied, unnoticed, disregarded, and for the most part unknown! without a friend to comfort them, and to soften the sorrows of their departing hour: ignorant of all the means of grace; and dying, as they live, "without God and without Christ in the world." Will you not feel your heart drawn out in praise and love to God for having escaped such a life of misery?

When you have properly weighed these considerations, also let me lead your thoughts to another view of the history of your own life, (and one's own life is certainly the most interesting history that any one can read), and let me call upon you to look back, and see if from your earliest years you cannot discern many sweet and precious tokens of divine love, and divine mercy towards you? Do you recollect where you was born, with whom you was brought up, and how your infant days and years of childhood were spent? Oh! could you read every page in your history in these helpless

seasons, how would you discover that the beginnings of mercy towards you have been from the very womb. All the buddings of childhood, and the blossoms of youth, were formed and nourished, and sheltered from storms, and nipping frosts, wholly by divine mercy. Nay, before you came forth from the womb, the source of all blessings were provided in Jesus Christ! And how, in the ripening seasons of your life, and even before maturity, have you blasted all the expected fruit by this one sad exposure to the ravages of the beasts of the field, and plucking up by the roots every thing that was lovely.

Pause once more—and while noticing through your life continued tokens of God's mercies over you, compare his grace with your undeservings. While the Lord hath been going before you, surrounding you, and following you all the days of your life with love; you have been causing him to serve with your sins, and wearying him with your iniquities: nay, in the very places made memorable with his kindness, you have raised monuments to your sin and rebellion. Is it not so, my poor child? Can you venture to plead not guilty to these charges?

And what tends to melt down the soul to the very footstool of the mercy-seat in the recollection of abused goodness is, that these transgressions, and the continued repeating of them, have not caused the Lord to withdraw his favour. He hath not said, 'as for that worthless, unthinking, and ungrateful creature, I will give her up to her own vile pursuits—my sabbaths which she hath despised, she shall have no more returns of them; the church-going bell, which hath called her in vain, shall next sound for her funeral.' Jesus hath not said thus concerning you—but on the contrary, the Lord hath directed your steps to this place, where you may still hear his word, sing his praise, call upon his name, and find his sabbaths precious to your soul. Surely, my poor child, it may be said in your

instance as it hath been in thousands beside; "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. v. 20, 21.

Lay all these considerations together—and now, at your first entrance into this house of mercy, that it may indeed prove a house of mercy to your soul, ponder well the very solemn subject. Look back, and as you behold the gulph from whence you are just escaped, think what a tremendous state *you was then in!* Think how long, and how unconcerned, you then hovered over the dreadful precipice of an awful eternity! Behold the situation *in which you now are!* Look round the walls of this retreat, and see the blessed means a gracious God hath here provided to make for your present peace, and your everlasting happiness. And under the solemn impression of the tremendous danger you was once in, and the safety into which you are now brought, think, my poor child, Oh! seriously think (and may the Lord impress the solemn thought by his grace upon your heart) where you will shortly be, and "how impossible to escape, if you neglect so great salvation."

Pause, my poor child, and if all these united arguments have their due and proper effect upon your heart, drop down upon your knees before the footstool of the mercy-seat, and until the Lord shall graciously have brought you more acquainted with himself that you can offer praises and supplications without a form; beg of the Lord to give you a spirit of grace to use the following, in heart and understanding, to his glory, and your comfort.

### THE PENITENT'S PRAYER.

Oh! thou that hast proclaimed thyself to the fallen race of men, under those endearing characters as "the

Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, and forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin;" encouraged by such grace, a poor broken-hearted penitent creature ventures in Jesus's name to approach thy gate of mercy. It hath been told me, Lord, what thou hast done for poor sinners: that "God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It hath been said moreover, that Jesus hath so loved sinners, as "to give himself for them;" so loved them, as "to die for them;" and so loved them, as "to wash away all their sins and pollutions in his blood." There never was, surely, one more polluted than my poor soul: never a creature upon earth that needed thy mercy more, or deserved it less. I am astonished at my own vileness. I look back and see a life marked with nothing but sin. Thou hast been blessing me with mercies, and I have been requiting thy love with rebellion. Morning by morning thou hast caused thy sun to shine in upon me with a thousand blessings; and night by night guarded my life through a thousand dangers; while I, poor, vile, unthinking creature, have been abusing the light with open transgression, and making the night a covering to my wickedness. Can there be mercy yet remaining for such a sinner? Are not all the stores of grace exhausted? Oh! Lord, I am awfully convinced that many, many whose sins have never equalled mine, have been cut off in the midst, and called to their final audit; while I remain the living monument of sparing mercy. And hast thou indeed spared me amidst all my daring provocations to the present moment? Am I yet upon praying ground! Hath the Lord not only spared me, but brought me here! Hath Jesus so marked his grace towards me, that when I merited hell, he hath guided my feet to

this place to shew me the path to heaven? Hath the Lord opened a retreat for my poor soul; brought me out of the prison-house of sin and Satan; opened to me a throne of grace; given me to see that Jesus ever liveth to make intercession for sinners, and is able to "save to the uttermost all that come to God by him?" Are these mercies still before me? Do I hear the heavenly proclamation still sounding in my ears, Jesus is exalted "as a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins;" and these mercies are even for "the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them?" Do I hear that precious and faithful saying, and which is worthy of all acceptation, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and of whom I am chief? Oh! the unequalled grace! Oh! the boundless love! Oh! that he who gave true repentance to the Magdalene that washed his feet, would put that grace also in my poor heart; for then, sure I am, the Lord that gave the grace to her, would give the same mercy to me. If Jesus would prepare my soul for his mercy, the Lord would send the mercy for which he had prepared. Look down from heaven upon me! See, Lord, if ever any poor sinner needed thee as I do. And see, blessed Jesus, whether the perishing state of my soul is not suited for so rich a Saviour to display all his love and pardon upon! It is said in thy holy word, that "in the day the great trumpet is blown, they shall come which were ready to perish!" Lord! my perishing circumstances have constrained me to come, therefore, Lord! save, or I perish. —Shall I not hope, shall not my poor soul feel a ray of hope that Jesus hears, and in his own good time will answer? Did the Son of God in the days of his flesh, ever send any poor wretch that sought his mercy empty away? And will he now, in the day of his power, be less Jesus a Saviour than then? Here, Lord! will I lie at thy footstool, until the kind answer comes. I

dare not arise: I dare not depart; for if I depart unheard and unanswered, I am lost for ever. Oh! then hear me "from heaven the habitation of thine holiness, and of thy glory!" Speak but the word, Lord, and my soul shall be healed. Say to me, as to the poor woman in the synagogue, whom "Satan had bound for eighteen years, woman thou art loosed from thine infirmity!" and like her then shall I glorify God, Luke xiii. 10—13. Precious, precious Jesus! give me to feel the sweet influences of thy blessed Spirit! teach me the song of redemption in thy blood, then shall I sing it daily upon earth; and when thou shalt call me home to see thy face in glory, surely I shall sing it louder than all the redeemed round thy throne in heaven, as having been recovered by thy sovereign arm from lower depths of sin than any they have known, and standing forth the greatest instance of Almighty mercy. Every day, and all the day, will I dwell upon the divine strain; and the last note upon earth shall be followed with the everlasting song, "Unto him that hath loved me, and washed me from my sins in his blood, be glory and praise for ever and ever." Amen.

And now, my poor child, having been to a throne of grace, there presented yourself for divine mercy and favour, and there made all your requests known unto God, let me hope that the Lord will give you grace to act faith upon God's gracious promises in Christ, and to believe that God is a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God, to all that seek his love and favour in the name of his dear Son. Making therefore this, and the like, your daily prayer at the mercy-seat, and leaving these petitions night and morning before the throne for kind answers of peace; let me call your attention to some of the leading objects which present themselves to your view in the penitentiary, and which are soliciting your regard all around.

And first, let it be impressed upon your mind, that

though necessity, or distress, hath brought you here, neither of these will long be upon you, it is to be hoped, to keep you here. The great design of an asylum is, to attend both to your spiritual and to your temporal interests. The governors of it earnestly desire to promote your present as well as your everlasting happiness. And it will be a subject of great joy to them, as well as to you, to see you go forth into the world a new character, and to rise up in life in some useful and honourable situation, as the Lord in his providence shall open for you. Let it not, therefore, appear to you an hard or painful service, if you are called upon to exercise the ability the Lord hath given you in some employment, as may best suit your own disposition, and promote the general good. This house is an house of industry, as well as an house of mercy. And of all the honourable and happy situations in the world, those are the highest and the best, where the energies both of mind and body are employed in contributing to the general weal. The man that works for his bread works for his health, and is the most likely to have a true sense and a thankful enjoyment of blessings. I will, therefore, put it down for granted, that you will be very earnest to be useful in any way, and in every way, by a life of industry and diligence, to promote the general good. And depend upon it, you will find by such a plan of conduct, that while you are studying by cheerfulness and attention to your duty in that state of life to which it hath pleased God to call you, you will, under his blessing, be no less found in the way to forward and promote your everlasting welfare in the life which is to come.

Let me next call upon you to look round, and behold in the countenances and appearances of the new family with whom you are now introduced to dwell, the blessed and happy effects of that state they have found in this place, and which under God's blessing,

you are now come to partake. Recollect that they were all once what you have so lately been. See what health is induced among them, from a change of life and manners; call to mind the midnight revels, and the haunts of licentiousness, in which you and they once were engaged. And now mark the order and regularity of this peaceable habitation! What heart but must melt in the recollection, that those lips which were only occupied in filthy conversation, are now engaged in prayer and praise; that the drunkard's song is changed for hymns, and the word of God takes place of lying novels, and books of profaneness and impiety. Do you not already begin to feel the happiness of the place? And may not such a change of life and manners serve to lead your thoughts to the contemplation of that blessed society above, and with whom through the merits and salvation of Jesus you may hope, ere long, eternally to dwell; where the everlasting praises of God and of the Lamb employ every heart, and engage every tongue!

Lastly, and upon the whole, shall not all that hath been brought before you in this little tract, prompt you to the love of Jesus? Pause once more, and ask your heart, are you convinced of the evil way of life in which you have lived in all that is now past? Are you pleased with your present situation, in being brought here? Are you truly in earnest to find present peace, and everlasting happiness? Look, then, to Jesus! It was Jesus whose grace hath led you here. His eye hath been upon you all the way; and even when you have been most despising his mercy, that mercy hath been upholding and supporting you. It was Jesus that at the call of God the Father first opened a door of redemption for sinners in his blood. It was Jesus that hath kept the door open to the present moment. It is Jesus that by his grace and favour hath brought you acquainted with it.

And if there be the smallest desire in your heart to partake of it, it is Jesus that created that desire by his blessed Spirit. And that that desire hath not been a thousand times extinguished, amidst the floods of your transgressions, is wholly to be ascribed to his love; he would not suffer "the bruised reed to be broken, nor the smoaking flax to be quenched." That the sickness you have known hath not brought on death, nor the evils of intemperance shortened your days, (and no doubt many warnings from both you have had) are wholly of Jesus's appointing. While the angel of death stood over you, and waited his command to execute the fatal stroke, Jesus was also looking on, and said, "Destroy it not, there is a blessing in it." And what is it now? If your soul, convulsed under a deep feeling of the nature of sin, and the infinite importance of salvation, is looking with an eye of hope for redemption in his blood; here also it is Jesus which prompts the heart to hope, and inclines that heart to seek it, in the new and living way which God hath appointed. Hence, therefore, it is all *of* Jesus, and all *from* Jesus, and all leading *to* Jesus. From him, then, seek grace, mercy, and favour. Let his love be the first object and desire of your heart. Let his pity to poor sinners, which from everlasting engaged his whole affection, be the daily, hourly study of your thoughts, until that by believing views of him, increasing knowledge of him, increasing love to him, and increasing communication from him, you thoroughly know him, live to him, and to his praise; then will your present state be a state of peace and tranquillity; and your everlasting state the full enjoyment of God in Christ in glory. Amen. Farewell, so be it.

## XXIX.

A REMARKABLE INSTANCE OF WEAK FAITH IN A TRULY REGENERATED CHRISTIAN IN THE LAST MOMENTS OF LIFE.

[Communicated in a Letter to the Editor of the Evangelical Magazine.]

*Rev. and Dear Sir,*

The very striking instance of the sovereignty of divine grace, as displayed in the recovery of the poor prostitute, which I did myself the honour of communicating to you, and which you conveyed to the public through the channel of the Evangelical Magazine, I sincerely hope may be productive of the desired effect, in bringing glory to God, and affording encouragement to mankind. As I am perfectly persuaded, that no truly awakened christian can attend to the affecting narrative of her conversion, without feeling the most lively emotions of gratitude to the gracious Author of salvation; so am I prompted to believe that, under the influence of his Spirit, the perusal of it may tend to encourage the timid mind to a greater dependence and faith in the same redeeming mercy. If these purposes shall be answered, by the publication of it, though in the smallest degree, I shall have cause to rejoice before God.

From the same motives which led me to address you upon that occasion, I have again assumed the pen, to transmit the particulars of another singular case, which hath occurred to my observation, in the course of my ministry: highly different indeed in its circumstances; yet, if I mistake not, equally illustrative of the same unquestionable doctrine; namely, that the regenerating power which alone produces conversion, as well as the comforts flowing from it, are all of grace. You are sensible, that it is our duty as well as our privilege, to observe as closely as possible the designs of God in all the ordinations of his providence and grace; for from

both, subjects are continually arising, which not only very highly edify and comfort the Lord's people, but tend to awaken all the corresponding affections of gratitude, and love, and adoration, and praise to the great Author of all blessings.

Nothing can accomplish these ends better, nor more admirably display the depths of divine wisdom in the salvation of men, than when we trace the infinite variety of methods in the several schemes of grace by which the Lord is guiding his chosen to glory. For whether we behold the day of small things, or the worm Jacob threshing the mountain, in either, or in both, we review divine strength made perfect in human weakness. God is the first great cause, from whom cometh every good and every perfect gift. "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every one severally as he will." Indeed, I am the more prompted to send you the particulars of the case I am going to relate, because it should seem (if I may presume to think so) to have been intended by the providence of God, that the remembrance of both should be connected together, in all those minds where he is pleased the knowledge of them should come. For both cases occurred nearly at the same time. They happened together; and it was in my province in the daily circuit of duty, while visiting the sick, just to have finished my attendance on the poor woman, whose case I have related in my former letter, when I was called upon to be a witness of the peculiar situation of the person whose interesting memoir is to be the subject of my present writing. So great a disparity in the two instances (as you will immediately perceive from the relation) could not but have struck a less attentive observer than myself. And I cannot but suppose was intended to produce an effect in the mind, both to admire and adore the depths of his wisdom, "whose

judgments are unsearchable, and whose ways are past finding out."

The person whose concluding history I have in view, died in the beginning of the last year, 1794, in the 70th year of his age. His character, as it stood in the general estimation of mankind, was very highly and very deservedly respected. In the several relative situations of life, as a husband, father, or friend, in short, as a man in all his intercourse with society, he was perhaps as irreproachable as any. Indeed, there was a certain constitutional happiness of mind about him, in a mildness and gentleness of disposition, which endeared him to all that knew him. In the early part of his life, he had been unsuccessful in trade; and willing to retreat from it, rather than involve himself in greater difficulties, or continue a fruitless pursuit, when there appeared but little probability of success, he gladly entered into a compromise with his creditors, by giving up his all to satisfy their just demands. Do not think me too minute in the relation of this man's history, until I shall have explained my motives for it. I have mentioned this trait in his character, in order to introduce another intimately connected with it; and because it serves in a great measure to give an idea of the tenor of his life. It will tend also in no small degree to illustrate more strikingly the great object I have in view from the publication of this memoir.

When, through the goodness of God's providence, a blessing followed his honest endeavours in another line of business, to which he directed his attention after the failure of the former, the first object which engaged his regard, and which he immediately accomplished, was to make up the deficiency of the balance which had been due to his creditors, by the payment of the full sum of the original debt. Though, according to the strict letter of the law, his creditors had no further demand upon him; and therefore, in the apprehension

of the bulk of mankind, such a conduct is considered inexpedient and unnecessary; yet so truly conscientious was the person of whom I am writing, that he gratefully paid every farthing; and even to the executors of some of his creditors, which in the interim had deceased, he observed the same conduct. But in all this, you will say, there is nothing of religion! True, Sir! neither do I relate it under the idea. I only mention it to shew, that, with respect to the great principles of morality on which some men lay such mighty stress, and consider them as the grand and efficient causes of salvation; few could have a better claim than he had to the divine favour, had that favour been purchaseable by any works of righteousness which we had done. It was not until about the last three and twenty years of his life that he became acquainted with the principles of real and experimental piety, or knew God in the sense in which all true believers in Christ know him. From his childhood, indeed, he had been accustomed to attend on public worship, and thus far to follow the outward means of grace. But till then they had been with him means only. He had the form but not the power of godliness. But when the Lord was graciously pleased to call him by his grace, and to reveal his Son in him, he was made willing in the day of God's power. With respect to the immediate cause which wrought instrumentally under God's Holy Spirit in his conversion, I have not been informed. But I have the fullest authority to conclude, that from the time in which the Lord manifested himself to his heart, until the period of his dissolution, he had uniformly given himself up to follow the Lord; and only desired to be passive and resigned, like the clay in the hands of the potter. Retired from business, and the more active scenes of public life, for some years before his departure from the world, his time was for the most

part divided amidst the several means of grace in attending divine worship, private devotion, family prayer, reading the scriptures, religious conversation, and the like; and as far as human nature could aspire, it seems to have been the great desire of his heart, under a constant dependence on divine aid, to have walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. It might have been expected, that the dying moments of such a character would have been eminently distinguished with manifestations of divine love; and that, as the lamp of life quivered in the socket, a beam of brightness would every now and then burst forth to illumine the gloom around. But, alas! this was not the case! Here, as in many other instances, "God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways." Indeed, it was the absence of those gracious manifestations of the divine goodness, which usually attend the last hours of the believer's life, which renders this man's history so singularly striking, and makes it worthy this particular record; and I trust, under God's blessing, the perusal of it will be instructive and edifying to all the faithful in Christ Jesus.

As he was not a parishioner of mine, nor belonged to my stated ministry, it came not within my immediate province to attend him in his sickness. However, as from the peculiar distresses and apprehensions of his mind, his family, to whom he was exceedingly dear, became the more concerned for his comfort and satisfaction, they therefore did not confine their application for spiritual consolation to the clergyman under whose ministry he was placed. He was visited occasionally by more than one of the sacred order, and in the number I had the advantage of being included. From a previous knowledge of his general character, and particularly his well known seriousness, I had pleased myself with the hopes that I should find in him another brilliant testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus; and

behold in his dying experience the happy effects of that joy and peace in believing, which make the christian abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. But, alas! I was disappointed. He could speak of general knowledge and general hopes which he entertained of salvation through the great Redeemer's merits, but not of the personal application of them to himself, and of those delightful experiences which are so common in the life of regenerated christians. 'God has given me to see,' he would say, 'the sad evil of sin and the misery of our fallen nature. I am awfully convinced of my utter unworthiness before God, and I can by full experience subscribe to the declaration of the apostle, "I know that in me dwelleth no good thing." I am as fully satisfied also that Christ died for sinners, and that he came to be the Saviour of sinners, and to seek and save that which is lost. Neither do I doubt a moment but that he is both able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. But though I have the highest conviction of these blessed truths as they belong to believers in general, I cannot find any of that comfortable assurance which arises from a personal application of them to my own experience; I want to know, and feel, and to be satisfied that he will save me; that I have an interest in his blood, and that my name is written in heaven. This is what I want to know and feel. I have heard others rejoicing in this assurance, and I desire most earnestly to partake of the same. But my faith is not equal to it. I pray the Lord to increase it, and to give me to feel this unspeakable blessing before my departure.'

A case so extremely distressing, could not, you may well suppose, but awaken our utmost endeavours to relieve. Accordingly our views were directed chiefly to that which is the grand expedient upon all occasions to bring comfort to the afflicted soul; I mean earnest and devout prayer to God; and most fervently did we

beseech the great Father of mercy, and God of all consolation, to "grant him according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in his heart by faith; and that he, being rooted and grounded in love, might be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that he might be filled with all the fulness of God." To the aids of prayer were added the consolations of scripture. In order to counteract the effects of those complaints which he was continually uttering with the greatest anxiety, I endeavoured to direct his attention to those refreshing promises of the holy word, which were more immediately suitable to his case, and such as were occasionally suggested to my remembrance; humbly imploring, at the same time, that God would bless the outward word with the inward efficacy of his holy Spirit. But through his extensive knowledge of the scriptures, enabled him to follow me very closely in every quotation which I made; and not unfrequently to supply my deficiency with others of a similar nature, which perhaps at the time did not occur to my recollection; and though he seemed to possess a considerable degree of energy in prayer, begging the mercy we so much desired for him, with apparently the greatest fervour; yet the complaint still continued, and I had the mortification to find, after many visits, that I had not been in the smallest degree instrumental to his comfort. It was in one of those mournful hours, while sitting by his bed-side, his children standing round much distressed; and he groaning under the complaints of want of faith, fervently beseeching the Lord to lift up the light of his countenance upon him, my mind became impressed with the sentiment, that God no doubt had some especial purpose to answer from this ordination, and that it was our duty humbly to

inquire into it. The thought was accompanied with instant relief; and that comfortable promise of scripture which I have found upon all occasions highly consolatory, but in the present eminently so, encouraged me to prosecute the idea; I mean, where it is said, that "all things work together for good to them that love God." As I meditated still more upon the subject, it struck me that one cause at least of this man's affliction might be resolved into some gracious consequences intended to be produced by it on the minds of others, and particularly his own children, whom he had been carefully endeavouring to bring up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. I immediately suggested to him my ideas. I said to him, 'my dear Sir, you cannot but be very sensible how much we all feel for the distresses of your mind; and what joy it would give every one now present to be the witness of those refreshments from the Lord which you so earnestly long for, and for which we have all offered up our continual prayer to the throne of grace; but since, notwithstanding our most fervent petitions for this blessing, the Lord sees it not fit to gratify our desires; it is not only our duty resignedly to acquiesce in the divine decision, but also humbly to inquire the reasons for which it is withheld, and to examine whether the seeming evil may not be converted into a greater good. You are convinced that God "does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men;" that "like as a father pitieth his own children, so is the Lord merciful to them that fear him." All the afflicting dispensations both of his providence and his grace, to his faithful people, are but the chastisements of an infinitely compassionate and tender parent, who cannot possibly mistake our interest, but is continually promoting our good, even by the ministration of supposed evil. It is a circumstance never to be forgotten, but more especially when matters are most dark and discouraging, that all things, how

unpromising soever they may appear, " all things work together for good to them that love God." Impressed, therefore, with a most perfect conviction of these unquestionable truths, I have been ruminating while I have sat here by your bed-side, what instruction it may be supposed we ought to gather from your present affliction. If " all things work for good to them that love God;" of consequence this must be among the rest. I venture to think, that one reason why the Lord permits you to be thus deeply exercised, is, for the spiritual and gracious improvement of others, and more especially these your children. They no doubt had consoled themselves with the belief, that a life such as your's would have closed in joy and tranquillity of spirit; but as on the contrary, they behold it terminating in fear and misgiving, how awfully are they taught therefrom to be awakened to greater earnestness in religion, and to " give all diligence to make their calling and election sure!" If, then, my dear Sir, your children should be benefited by your trials, surely you will not regret, that the valley of death is more than usually dark and comfortless. Fear not, but that the end of it will at length open into everlasting brightness, and that he who is both the light and life of his people, will shine forth upon your soul, in that important moment, with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory.'

As I suggested these and the like considerations to his mind, I could perceive a beam of hope brightening up his saddened countenance, and his soul seemed to be refreshed with the consolation. Although, during the remainder of his illness, to the close of it, in his death, it might be gathered from his countenance and expression that the thought of this certainly lessened his affliction, and reconciled him more to the divine will, yet the evil itself, and even to the last hour, was not removed.

I had hoped indeed, and communicated to him my expectations, that some gracious manifestations from the Lord would yet precede his dissolution. But if they did, they were known only to himself; for, to all outward appearances, as he lived so he died; mourning over his afflictions, and praying for more enlarged views of God's faithfulness and mercy. Here I would beg to be understood, and therefore shall once more repeat it, that he had unquestionably a general hope and persuasion of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus for sinners; yet, as to the special and particular application of it to himself, (gratifying as it is to the faithful, and eminently to be coveted by every one) his confidence was truly weak, and his mind disturbed by fearful apprehensions.

It would be superfluous to add the very obvious reflections which arise out of this affecting case; and indeed after so largely trespassing on your patience, I dare not encroach any further. One short observation only I would beg to subjoin, because it hath a more immediate appeal to the breast of every timid believer. It is to be apprehended from various occurrences in life, that this man's history is by no means singular. There are many humble souls, who fear the Lord, and obey the voice of his servant, but yet, like him, walk in darkness, and have no light. Now nothing can more strikingly enforce the necessity of obeying the precept by the prophet, or shew its importance in the very comforts of life, than what hath been adduced in the instance before us arising from the want of it: "to trust in the name of the Lord, and to stay upon his God." For where the religious trust or stay is become fixed and abiding, it shuts out all lesser considerations. It should be remembered that it is in seasons of extraordinary trials, when the soul is bereaved of all comforts, that faith is to have her perfect work. In such moments to cease from man and to stay upon God, should

be the invariable practice of every true believer. It is possible that in the very crisis when all things appear at the worst, and when the fearful christian, like the disciples on the sea of Galilee, surrounded with storms and tempests, is ready to give over every thing for lost, and to cry out, "Lord, save, or I perish;" the Redeemer, as then, is yet but the nearer at hand, to rebuke both winds and waves, though he seemeth as if he heard not. In short, as nothing can arise to overthrow the security, so nothing should be found sufficient to cast down, even for a moment, the confidence of him in whose breast the Holy Spirit witnesseth in his spirit that he is a child of God. Once assured by those infallible evidences which the Holy Ghost hath given, that he hath begun a good work in the heart, we ought not to doubt but he will complete it unto the day of Jesus Christ. The believer may have his dark and trying hours. The furnace of affliction, to throw off the reprobate silver may be heated yet seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated, but in all this the voice of him who stands by, and orders both the process and the fire, may be heard by the ear of faith;—"Be still, and know that I am God." "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercy will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy upon thee."

## XXX.

### THE ROYAL EXCHANGE.

I had been a considerable time in town without having once visited any of the public buildings, or indeed any other place of general resort (the church excepted) which excites the curiosity of the traveller. My friend, the merchant, with whom I resided, had frequently expressed his wish that I would go with him to the Royal Exchange, whither his business statedly called him. I had as constantly waved the invitation. The truth was, having seen the King in his beauty, that sight had tarnished the lustre of all earthly splendour. The eye which but for a moment hath beheld the sun in his shining, finds a dark spot upon every other object to which its views are afterwards directed. It is said by some naturalist (I forget by whom) that the load-stone loseth all its powers of attraction in the presence of the diamond. The truth of this I stay not to inquire into; but this I know, where Jesus hath been truly seen, and truly known, and the happy souls on whom the light of his divine countenance is reflected, creature-glory of every kind is obscured, like the stars of the night, which disappear before the face of the bright luminary of the day. The importunity of my friend, however, that I should see the Royal Exchange, was so repeated from day to day, that I could not, without a breach of decorum, resist any longer. I dislike a fastidiousness, where nothing truly important is sacrificed. I resolved, therefore, when the hour of Exchange next arrived, to accompany him thither, though, I confess, it was more for his gratification than mine.

The day came, and we set out. On our arrival, my mind was wonderfully arrested with all I saw and

heard. The place, though spacious, was full of persons; and earnestness was strongly pictured upon every countenance. The clamour of voices to an ear unaccustomed as mine was, to such confused sounds, was almost deafening; and though, no doubt, perfectly intelligible to one another, yet seemed to remind me of what I had read of Babel: but what, at first view made the greatest impression upon my mind was, that one general feature marked every character, whether buyer or seller—I mean the unwearied perseverance, uniformly distinguishing all, to accomplish the object of their distinct pursuits. Here were no vacant countenances. Nothing like the shew of indifferency. Every one appeared alive, zealous, and indefatigable. Alas, thought I, what a reproach are these men to the most animated followers of the Lord Jesus Christ! Surely, at this place may be daily seen and exemplified, in the most lively colours, the truth of our Lord's aphorism, "The children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light." I soon lost sight of my friend, the merchant, amidst the throng. His keenness for business led him into the thickest of the bustle, and left me to make my own reflections upon what I saw; and, indeed, a large scope was afforded for their exercise.

As I looked on and contemplated the mass, I could not help meditating what a short period the lives of this busy multitude was comprised in, notwithstanding all that vast bustle which now appeared among them. It is recorded of Xerxes, the Persian commander, that he burst into tears when looking over his army, consisting of a million, in the recollection that the period of a few years would earth them all. Similar thoughts crossed my mind in beholding this assembly of merchants. This spot (I said to myself, as I surveyed it in various directions) hath been occupied by a generation as little known, and as little regarded by those who now occupy

it, as the race that is to succeed them. Where are they now, whose presence was once thought indispensably necessary to give energy to the several schemes of trade around them? Suppose the possibility, that some of the most enterprising among them, who, when alive, set all the wheels of this vast machine of commerce in motion, supposing they could now return to demand the places they once filled, and the respect they once had, how mortified would be their pride, in the total neglect shewn them! No doubt there were various who lorded it here most highly; no price for goods given, no standard for the purchase and sale of stock adjusted, until their arrival! As Job describes his importance in the day of his prosperity, so they moved: "When I went out to the gate," said Job, "through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street, the young saw me and hid themselves, and the aged arose and stood up," Job xxix. 7, 8. But what vestige remains of all that pomp, importance, and vain-glory? If the poorest passengers across the church-yard where their ashes lie, were to stumble over their bones, and take up the scull of either, whereby would the figure it once made here be known? And would it not be the wisdom of survivors to anticipate, now and then, a situation in which such great ones are now in, and what shortly their own must be? To look out of their graves in idea, before they get into them in reality, and direct a short view to the spot where they now make such a mighty bustle, and solemnly ask themselves, what is the *ultimatum* of all the enterprizes, cares, toils, and exchanges which they crowd into the narrow compass of life? Is it not strange, nay, passing strange, that all the warnings of others, added to all the melancholy confessions of dying men on these subjects, of the vanity and disappointments of all, should never proselyte a single person to a more sober way of thinking? All

the voices and cries put forth to deter from an over pursuit of the world, have no effect upon survivors! No; men will see with their own eyes, and, what is yet worse, will feel, to their own sorrow, when that feeling comes too late for remedy, before they are brought to the full conviction, "that all is vanity and vexation of spirit!"

I had not long surveyed the group of characters which passed and repassed before me in the Exchange, before it struck me that I discovered many faces carrying with them the aspect of disappointment. I do not, indeed, pretend to the knowledge of a Lavater, in the science of physiognomy, but this discernment required no great penetration. Whether from the want of buyers with some, of the reduced price to the sellers with others; whether bad accounts of foreign markets, or failures in home consumption, I had no ability to discover the causes; but I really ventured, from what I saw, to conclude, that by far the majority of the meeting did not find things corresponding to their wishes; and the barter which took place among them left but few to call their exchanges royal.

I remarked a great number of advertisements hung in frames, or pasted on boards, on the walls of the Royal Exchange,—many of them containing a sorrowful want: but whether from their being considered as common place things, or whether from the imperious demands which every man's own separate concern made upon him, it appeared that their tales of woe were not much regarded. Alas! I said, here is but little time for charity, of any description, to put in her claim. The whirlpool runs round too rapidly, and drags into the vortex too powerfully to allow attention, much less relief, to such as are not within the tide. But what of that? Those that are out, and want places, and those that are in, and want none, by and

by will all be upon a level. The most successful in the whole circle—he whose pursuits (to speak in the language of the world's vocabulary) are most active, what is the final upshot of his gains? He only dies somewhat richer than his neighbour, that's all; and his son or heir will take care to let the world know it. The inquiry at the Exchange, when his death is announced from every mouth, is, what did he die worth? Like a carcase at the shambles, the question only turns upon one point, doth he turn out well? And is it for such ends as these, one generation after another is for ever projecting schemes of gain, pursuing the phantom to the very close of life, and dying in the very moment of grasping a bubble?

And is there in reality no Exchange that may be well called *royal?* Yes, there is; and, if half the energy which is put forth here for temporal things, were directed to the acquirement of things spiritual, this would be a barter indeed, well deserving the name. The thought pleased me, as the imagination passed over my mind. I called to remembrance him who, among other sweet portraits of character, is set forth in his scriptures under the beautiful similitude of a "Merchantman," Rev. iii. 17, 18. It forms a most endearing image of Jesus, and is highly calculated to win the affections of his people; and, while the idea was strongly floating upon my imagination, it was not very difficult to realize him, as though present. Indeed, methought I beheld him the busiest and most earnest of all the throng, holding forth his merchandize to the thoughtless, inconsiderate mass, comprising every blessing, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. My imagination operated as if I heard his voice speaking in the most persuasive and engaging manner, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest

be clothed. Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness."

The Royal Exchange never appeared to my view in so charming a light before. This (I exclaimed) would make it *royal* indeed, if such wares were vended here! Here a King barters with his subjects—his riches for their poverty,—his wisdom for their ignorance,—his grace for their undeservings. He calls it a sale; but, surely, there never was a parallel to it; for he literally sells to the poor and to the needy; not only to them who have no money, but that have no credit; not only to men of character, but to the insolvent. The poorer the wretch, the more welcome at his Royal Exchange. Indeed, the cause is obvious. The blessings he holds forth are in themselves invaluable, and come not within the reach of any pocket; and, moreover, he that gives them is too rich to need the smallest return from the creatures of his bounty; and delights too much in acts of grace, to receive any thing from the services of creatures. Yes, dearest Lord, I have found in thee and thy bounties a Royal Exchange indeed! "Thou sawest me poor, and thou hast made rich; naked, and thou hast clothed me; sick, and thou hast visited me." Both my sins and my sorrows thou hast borne, that I might enter into the joy of my Lord! "The heart of stone hast thou taken away, and hast given me an heart of flesh!" I had nothing to offer thee but sin, and thou hast given me of thy righteousness. My soul was polluted with every defilement, and thou hast washed me clean in thy blood! Hail! thrice blessed, thrice gracious Lord! Well may I bless the bountiful God of all my mercies! "This merchandize cannot be gotten for gold, neither can silver be weighed for the price thereof. Thou art more precious than rubies; and all the things that can be desired are not to be compared to the value thereof." My imagination

having thus taken wing, numberless images arose to my view as I prosecuted my flight in every direction. No doubt (I said to myself, as I contemplated the vast prospect) no doubt the Royal Exchange of England is the grand emporium, the first and principal market of all Europe, nay, of all the world: for her commerce very far exceeds that of every other maritime power; so that this Exchange becomes the standard to regulate and give price to all? But what is this compared to the Royal Exchange of heaven; from whence, as from the one great port and source of all, goods are imported and distributed to replenish and supply all the varieties of the earth;—nay, if the expression be warrantable (and with all possible reverence it is spoken) from whence God, in his fulness, as manifested in the person and graces of Jesus, is everlastingly issuing forth in blessings to all his creatures.

I felt my heart warmed as I contemplated the subject. Here (I said to myself, as I looked on the crowded assembly of merchants around me) here may be considered a vast property, brought together for traffic; but what is this to the treasures of heaven? Here all is limited; but there the treasures are infinite. Here the several merchants trade for earth; there the traffic is for heaven. These may be, and indeed they must be, soon spent; but the treasures of Jesus are unsearchable, and consequently inexhaustible; for what cannot be explored, can never be consumed.

Surely, it forms one of the most magnificent and sublime thoughts the mind of man is capable of embracing within the grasp of its faculties, in the present unripe state of existence, the contemplation of divine love, in this display of his munificence! To consider God as, from eternity, thus planning the happiness of his creatures, having an infinite mass of grace and glory to bestow, determined to give it to them, and not only to give it to them, notwithstanding their unde-

servings, but to give it to them in such a way as might make the blessings tenfold more sweet, and display thereby the marvellous extent of his affection! And how did the Lord accomplish this? In the first place, to make the blessings themselves everlastingly secure, he deposits them in a treasury where they never can be exposed to the possibility of danger; and, therefore, makes the bosom of his dear Son the vast magazine; for in Jesus are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In the next place, by his process, God consults the pleasures of his people, as well as the security of his mercies; for where would we wish our mercies to be placed for delight as well as security, but in him who while he is One with the Father, God over all, blessed for ever, is also "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh."

But the divine benignity doth not rest here; for God having thus both secured our blessings for carrying on the heavenly traffic, and placed them in such gracious hands as must open a perpetual source of profit and of joy, that nothing might be wanting for opening a channel of communication between heaven and earth, the Lord sends down his Holy Spirit, to tell the inhabitants of this lower world, that there is a royal, an heavenly, a divine Exchange opened, where needy, poor, insolvent, helpless creatures may, every day and all the day, make an advantageous barter, and carry on a merchandize which never shall fail, either in this world, or in that which is to come.

And to incline their hearts to this perpetual commerce, he hath established ordinances and means of grace—appointed his sabbaths—given them his holy word,—set up a standing ministry in his churches, that in every place where two or three are met in his name, his presence may be there, according to his promise to bless them.

And here, indeed, it may be truly said, is a Royal

Exchange, not only as extensive as the earth, but always open. Like heaven itself, the gates of it are never shut, night nor day. The Lord comes, in the power of his Holy Spirit, with a fulness corresponding to every want, so that none may go empty away. Every case is already known, and for every want there is a merchandize. Bills of lading, an invoice of promises, nay, epistles from the Lord himself, in which he unbosoms himself, in a gracious and affectionate manner, and leaves as it were blanks for his people to fill up, and thereby draw upon him at all times for payment!

And so astonishingly great is the Lord's kindness in his heavenly traffic, that he seems as if determined to make all his followers truly rich and happy: for this purpose he puts himself under obligations to answer all the demands which are presented in his Son's name, by faith; and, in order that they may feel no restraint, he expressly assures them that "he is able to do for them exceeding abundantly above all that they can ask or think." What a blessed thing would it be if this were more known, more studied, more enjoyed!—that the lawful and laudable pursuits of this world's commerce were sometimes intermitted, so that the more important concerns of a better might come in for a proportionable share of attention! If the bible became the ledger, and the church the Exchange, this would be as the word of God recommends, "to use the world as not abusing it."

My thoughts had been so fully occupied in the contemplation of this subject, that I was not aware of the lapse of time. I found, indeed, the company thinning; and the great mass with which the Exchange had been lately filled, now dwindled to a very few.—My friend, the merchant, approached me. I observed his countenance; it was not a little discomposed. Somewhat, I conjectured, had happened; he soon explained. It ap-

peared, that in a payment he had made, the dealer had omitted to give him credit for it. 'But,' said my friend, 'I have his voucher at home.' Alas! thought I how often hath my God been robbed of his credit, and my own soul of comfort, through the same kind of negligence! How soon have I forgotten the fulfilment of his promises, and instead of marking down their payment, have suffered him to stand still on the debtor side in the account, so that he hath been defrauded of that acknowledgment in praise, which was so justly his due.

I returned with my friend, as soon as he had finished his business, much more delightful than I had conceived a visit to the Royal Exchange could have made me; and I was led therefrom to conclude, that there are few situations in life which might not, under the Spirit's teaching, be rendered profitable to the contemplative mind; not only in the church, but in the market place; not in the cloister of the hermit only, but in the busy city. Wherever the Lord's presence is kept in view, there will be always somewhat in his providential dispensations, as well as in his ordinances of grace, from whence improvement may be derived.

And, indeed, of all situations in the world, none, perhaps, can lead us into a greater variety of departments for instruction, in spiritual concerns, than that of the merchant. Doth not the man who sends forth his ventures upon some very promising speculation, call in all the stock he can, and make as large a store for that purpose as possible, though in other points, perhaps, he straitens himself to do it? Such should be the conduct of the wise, spiritual merchantman, upon that more sure commerce, in which he seeks the riches of Jesus Christ. Here is nothing of speculation, nothing of doubtful issue,—but the gains are certain, blessed, incalculable!

And as the merchantman, in his earthly projects,

after he hath thus embarked his property, is continually on the look-out, inquiring, what harbour the ships touch at?—what port they reach?—what traffic they make?—when they will return?—and how laden?—so, surely the man that trades in spiritual and heavenly pursuits, should be like the prophet upon the watch-tower, to look and hear what answers the Lord gives, and when the blessings implored come down. Too often, for want of this attention, pious men suffer numberless mercies to pass and repass unperceived; because like the ostrich, who layeth her eggs in the dust, regardless of the foot of the traveller, they bury the recollection of the petitions which they have presented before the throne, and forget, too often, what they prayed for.

And what merchantman among the dealers at the Royal Exchange, in case of a quick and prosperous return of his ships, will overlook the bills of exchange, or forget how much his gains have been by such a voyage, or how to apply his property! But yet the heavenly trader, how prosperous soever he is, though his returns to prayer are made in a few days, and richly indeed laden; yet because he doth not decypher the Lord's hand in the mercy, the letters of love with which the blessings come, often lie by unregarded; he is neither sensible of his mercies, nor improves them to God's glory, or to his own furtherance in grace.

And there is one thought more which the conduct of the merchant suggests, and which the spiritual trader may improve to great advantage: I mean in those cases where long voyages, long detention by adverse winds or trade, excite many fears for the safety of his property; yet with what reluctance will he relinquish his hopes, while the shadow of a possibility remains! Now surely, here the faithful may learn a most profitable lesson, when to their long and patient waiting for re-

turns from heaven, silence from the throne awakens doubts and misgivings. If the earthly merchant never desponds while a vestige of hope remains, the heavenly one may well be confident, seeing the promise to him is absolute, "that in due season he shall reap, if he faint not."

## XXXI.

### THE TURNPIKE-GATE.

The bells from the several churches were sweetly chiming, to call to the house of prayer; and whether it was the effect of imagination, or from some higher source operating upon my mind at the moment, I know not, but so it was, they seemed to form, in my apprehension, an echo to the gracious invitation of the word, as if they said, "whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life."

"Bountiful Lord!" thought I, "was it not enough to provide so rich a Saviour for poor sinners as Jesus, but dost thou open also in him fountains and streams from Lebanon? Dost thou cause channels of ordinances to be running through the kingdom, for conveying the blessings of redemption, where the poor and needy may come and receive freely, without money and without price?"

Happy nation! happy people! O England, didst thou but know how rightly to appreciate thy mercies! surely it may be said of our highly favoured is land, as it was of Judea of old, "what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?" We can enjoy our sabbaths free and unmolested, while multitudes upon the face of the earth know not what a sabbath means, nor ever heard the "sound of the church-going bell!" Nay, to come nearer home, thousands of our neighbours on the continent have lost the very distinction of the holy day amidst the din of war and the horrors of revolution!

I was hastening to the house of God, under the sweet impression of these thoughts, and in my mind anticipating the rich enjoyment this hallowed day

opened to my views, when my mind was suddenly arrested with the noise of passengers, some on horses, and some in chariots, driving with eagerness towards the Turnpike-gate, as if the attainment of every thing which constitute happiness, was thrown open to their pursuit.

I paused as I beheld the affecting sight. 'Is it possible,' I said to myself, as the busy throng glided by me, 'is it possible that these can ever once have considered the great end and design of man, or the mercy of a sabbath? Surely, they have never seen thy loveliness, thou blessed Redeemer of mankind! for had they known thee, this day would have been endeared to them as thine, bringing with it, as it doth, the blessings of salvation! And yet, methinks, even now, as the giddy crowd is hastening by, I behold thee (as thou art beautifully represented in thy sacred word) "standing at the gates, and at the entering in of the city," lifting up thy voice with all the tenderness which distinguishes thy character, saying, "O ye simple, when will ye understand knowledge? and, ye fools, depart from folly?"

I felt my heart melting as I looked on. 'Oh, had I but the power of persuasion (I said to myself) what a subject is here for entreaty! Here eloquence might find scope to lavish forth all her noblest powers!'

Nothing but the consciousness of an inability to the service, could have restrained the impulse I felt to go forth in argument or persuasion. Methought I could have caught one and another by the arm, and with all the winning affection of an awakened concern, I could have said, 'my poor, unthinking brother, had either of you an idea that this sabbath might be your last, would you, or could you, consume it in the manner you intend? Would you wish to be found ending time and beginning eternity, in the very act of bidding defi-

ance to one of the most positive commands of God? Have you never heard of the solemn unalterable precept, "Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy?" And supposing (what no human being can be sure may not be the case) that before the shades of night close in upon the earth, the shades of death should close in upon your existence, how would your soul be harrowed up to all the possibilities of misery, to hear the first tremendous voice hailing your approach into the world of spirits, with saying, 'this is the wretch who bade Omnipotence do his worst, and found death in the moment of breaking his sabbath!'

The thought wounded as it passed over my mind. It brought to my recollection an awful circumstance of this kind, which took place in the town of Devizes, near Bath, (the Lord only knows how numerous they may be elsewhere) the particulars of which are recorded on a monument in the church-yard there. It affected me so much in the perusal, that I could not resist the desire of transcribing it. If the reader should ever pass that way, he may find it near a row of trees at one end of the burying ground. It stands in the form of an obelisk.

*The following is the inscription on this awful Monument :—*

In Memory
of the unfortunate end of
Robert Merritt and Susannah his Wife,
Elizabeth Tilley her Sister,
Martha Carter, and Joseph Denham,
who were all drowned, in the Flower of their Youth,
in a Pond near the Town called *Drews*,
on Sunday, the 30th of June;
and are together underneath entombed.

*On another compartment of the stone is added,*

Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.
This Monument,
as an awful Monitor to Young People,
to remember their Creator in the days of their
youth,
was erected by Subscription.

But to return. Amidst the group which I beheld turning their backs on the house of God, as if judgment

and not mercy was to be expected there, one party caught my attention with more than ordinary concern: it was a young couple, with a lovely child of about (as it should seem) a year old. They were in what is called *a gig*; and the sweet unconscious babe lay in its mother's arms. The father's attention was engaged to drive a horse, apparently not much used to the service; and he himself still less accustomed to the province he had assumed.

Independent of the danger arising from the restiveness of the poor animal, and the want of skill in the driver, there was cause of continual apprehension from the number of coaches, chariots, and horses, passing and re-passing on the road. As I looked on, they seemed to me as if, in the moment they drove by, they had several narrow escapes from being crushed between the larger carriages running in every direction. 'What!' I said to myself, 'if a single untoward circumstance should happen! Should the horse take fright, or the wheel on either side get entangled, or the gig upset,—in either case, what can preserve them? And should a morning so fair and promising bring on evil before night,—should death on his pale horse appear,—what follows?'

My mind shuddered at the images I had raised;—I sought to forget the whole in turning from the scene, and hastening to the church. The bells were still chiming; and I still interpreted their language, "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon; look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon; from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards."

'Yes,' said my heart, as I construed the gracious invitation, 'I will come with thee my Beloved; for thy love is better than wine. Neither shall the goodly mountain of Lebanon, which Moses, the man of God, so ardently longed to see; nor Shenir, nor Hermon,

keep me back. Lions, in human form, and sinners, whose various hue, like the spots of the leopard, are in every place; but, Lord, I will come out from among them, and not touch the unclean thing. Yes, Lord, I will attend thee to the ordinances of thy grace, where the "King is held in the galleries," and where he manifests himself otherwise than he doth to the world. At thy call I come, and will go forth with thee "into the field, and lodge in the villages, and get up early to the vineyards." For the field of thy scripture, and the villages of thy people, and the vineyards of thy church, will be sweet and precious when Jesus is in the midst, and where he gives his loves.'

Oh! did the world but know the sweets of that gracious communion which takes place between Jesus and his people! Had they an apprehension of that "joy which is unspeakable and full of glory," which ariseth from the mutual communications,—when he imparts of his fulness in exchange for their emptiness,—we should not find the wretched mistake which is now so often made in the prosecution of things temporal, to the loss of those which are eternal!

I forgot awhile, in the house of prayer, the distressing sights I had left behind me in the street. Like the church brought into the banqueting-house, "I sat under the shadow of Jesus with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

Jesus, one day beneath thine eye,
To hear thy gracious voice,
Exceeds a whole eternity
In empty carnal joys.
Had I the world at my command,
With all th' expanse of sea,
For one bless'd hour at thy right hand,
I'd give the whole away.

But when the public services of the day were over, my thoughts again recurred to the recollection of the unpleasant scenes of the morning. What is become of the multitude (I said to myself, as I returned from the

house of God) which I beheld going forth "to sport themselves (as scripture strongly expresses it) with their own deceivings?" Perhaps some of them are no more! Awful consideration! Perhaps others with broken limbs, or sad disasters, are lamenting over their own folly; and, no doubt, there is a great mass in such a state of drunkenness, as to be incapable of thinking at all.

Is it not astonishing, that serious considerations, on the sin and ruin of such pursuits, should never cross the minds of men of this description! Indeed, it is easy to conceive that, during the hey-day of folly, and while the delirium remains, there can be but little time for reflection; but one might be led to hope that, when the effervescence of the pleasurable moment had subsided, men could not be prompted to prosecute the same everlasting chance from one sabbath to another. It is difficult to believe that any, even of the most abandoned sabbath-breakers, can have his mind so hardened, through the deceitfulness of sin, as cordially to approve what he is nevertheless perpetually pursuing. Suppose the question were proposed to him at the cool of the evening, and he were asked, whether the day had been spent by him in such a manner as, upon due reflection, he could wish it to have been?—whether it meets his perfect approbation?—and whether he supposeth that God approves of it also?

As these thoughts occupied my mind, the Turnpike-gate, which I had seen in the morning, opened again to my view, and the multitude were as numerous as ever. I felt a disposition to go towards it. Perhaps an opportunity may present itself of being useful. It is possible that one or other of the thoughtless throng may have a mind open to conviction. The idea pleased me, and I determined to make the experiment. With this view I turned aside from the street which led to my home, and crossed to the gate. To a mind unac-

customed to what passed in the world on a sabbath, when the day is fine, what astonishment would be excited were he to come forth amidst the busy pleasure-pursuing multitude! The imagination, indeed, is not sufficiently capacious to form an adequate conception of the various scenes which present themselves in every direction. As I passed on, mine eyes and ears were made continual purveyors of evil. Apple-stalls in the open road, children of all ages, and young men and girls of stouter years, of all descriptions, as much engaged in their pastimes as on the common days of the week. Shops here and there half shut, as if to put a little blush upon it, but in reality to say, we admit of no restraint to our traffic. Troops of servants, of both sexes, in the enjoyment of what is called their *Sunday out*; and multitudes of higher rank, by way of example, in proof that they keep no *Sunday in*. The mind sickens in the prospect. Like the patriarch at Gerar, every looker-on, not totally lost to feeling, must make the same reflection as he did: "Surely the fear of God is not in this place!"

Who shall calculate, in the aggregate, the sum total of Sunday profanation on the more retired paths of it, when we behold with what unblushing confidence men come forward, in open day-light, as if to tell the world they despise all laws respecting it, both human and divine? Surely, if the Jew we read of, was counted worthy of stoning, because he had gathered sticks on the sabbath-day, the character calling himself christian, can hardly flatter himself that he shall escape with impunity, under a more daring violation of the Lord's day! Indeed, is not the general disregard of the sabbath, which the present period abounds with, among the crying sins of the nation, eminently alarming? Doth not this species of transgression erect itself into a more daring form of defiance, as peculiarly directed towards God?—and may we not hear a voice walking through

the land, in the public calamities of the awful war in which we have been long involved,—"Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? shall not my soul be avenged of such a nation as this?"

I pause one moment to congratulate the people at large, that there is yet a seed which serve God; and I pause another, to remind the people of God themselves of their happy privileges. Your mercies, in this respect, are incalculable, in whose hearts and in whose houses the fear of God is. To be kept even from beholding the whirlpool in which the mass are engulphed on those sacred days,—to stand in a place of safety, where the high water-mark of their sin and destruction cannot reach, and to be exempt from the very circle of temptation, is an unspeakable blessing, of the extent of which you are not fully aware. I know, indeed, that many gracious souls complain of the leanness of ordinances, and of their own barrenness under them; but I know also, that those very complaints do, in a great measure, refute themselves; for they actually prove that the desire of the soul is for greater and closer communion with the Lord; and it will be well for such to inquire of their own minds, whether the Lord doth not sometimes throw a damp upon the sweetest ordinances, on purpose to teach that it is the Lord of ordinances, and not the ordinance itself, which can truly satisfy the soul? And if means become less profitable, in order to endear him the more to the heart, surely what seemed a loss becomes ultimately a gain; and that man is truly taught of God who knows how to spin comfort, even from the entangled and thready fragments of life; which, though they yield not in themselves profit, become the means of leading to it. In this sense, the least solemn periods of this holy day, though not engaged in divine exercises, minister to good; for they keep from the world, into which it is impossible to go forth without meeting, at every step we take, like

Jacob's daughter, circumstances to offer violence to the chastity of the soul.

As I prosecuted my path amidst the scenes of general dissipation, distressed with all I saw, and not a gleam of hope from the countenances of any I met, of being useful, one object of more than common attraction, caught my eye, which seemed to wage war with all the sanctity of the sabbath: it was one of those modern hotels, where the invitation of jollity, that it might not be mistaken, was placed over the door, in the most conspicuous characters, '*An Ordinary here every Sunday.*' Admirable expedient, I exclaimed, to ensure success! Sunday, forsooth, must be the day, and every Sunday too! Had such entertainments been in repute when Bunyan wrote his Pilgrim, they would have made a striking figure in the scenes of his Vanity Fair.

I paused as I read it. Would the gentleness of expostulation (I said to myself) operate upon such minds, were it to be called forth? Would any of this description listen to reproof? Alas! would not the glow-worm of resentment rather redden through the whole countenance! Most likely, lenient measures would lose all efficacy; and to rouse from such a state of conduct, can only be the result of caustic applications; but, had I the power and opportunity, like the herald of Philip, though on a commission of higher moment than his, I would, morning by morning, cry aloud through all the chambers of the heart, "What is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

The evening was now far advanced. It was high time to return from my fruitless expedition; besides, the sacred employments of the day had suffered much by interruption. I hastened home, under the impressions of the happiness of those who have God for their portion, and the enjoyment of his sabbaths, the blessed privilege of his people here below. I recollected what David had said, and I felt the full sweetness of it:—

"Blessed are they that dwell in God's house; they will be still praising him;"—and if there be a heaven upon earth, it must be in such employments! Reader, what are your sentiments on this subject? Can you, and do you, join issue in it? Surely, charity herself, with all the energy she possesseth, cannot hope that a heart deadened to divine impressions upon earth, can be alive to their enjoyment in heaven! And certain it is, if we do not relish the sweet pleasures of devotion God hath appointed for men here below, never shall we attain, or even if attained, truly relish, the felicities of that "rest which remaineth for the people of God."

## XXXII.

### POOR ROBIN'S CREED.

A poor man of the name of Robin, remarkable in the neighbourhood where he dwelt, for his very sober and orderly conduct, both in religion and morals, was one day questioned by a gentleman of the parish, who had long taken notice of his exemplary deportment, to what cause it was owing, that he was enabled, amidst the difficulties and temptations of his low estate, to conduct himself with so much propriety?

'Would your honour wish,' said Robin, 'to hear a little of my history?'

'I should be very glad indeed,' replied the gentleman, 'if you think proper.'

'With a great deal of cheerfulness,' answered poor Robin, 'for I take a particular pleasure in the relation. For while looking back upon what I once was, makes me humble, the recollection of what, through divine grace I now am, fills my soul with praise.

'You must be told, then, Sir,' continued the poor man, 'in the very commencement of my history, that it is not many years since I was as great an "enemy to God by wicked works," as any man in the parish could well be. "Living without God and without Christ in the world," my corrupt and sinful heart was contriving only, from day to day, how to make provision for the flesh, and to fulfil the lusts thereof. And so, Sir, should I have continued for ever, had not "God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved me, even when I was dead in sin, quickened me from dead works to serve the living and true God."

'The change wrought upon my heart, under the divine blessing, was the effect of sickness. The Lord in his providence was graciously pleased (blessed be his

holy name!) to visit me, among many others in the village with a fever. And all I can tell you on the subject, Sir, is this: that I laid down on that bed of sickness, perhaps as thoughtless, sinful, and unworthy a creature as ever God's mercy spared! and I arose from it again, the reclaimed sinner you have since observed me to be. If you desire me to go farther into the account, and tell you to what source this change is to be ascribed, I can only say, to the sovereign, free, and unmerited grace of God. For sure I am, that in my instance, whatever others may think of their's, I could contribute nothing to my own conversion. And I desire for ever to lie low in the dust before God, and to acknowledge, that from the beginning to the end, it is "by the grace of God I am what I am." '

'But, Robin,' said the gentleman, 'do explain to me how this work you speak of was accomplished in the heart?'

'That, Sir,' replied the poor man, 'is impossible. How shall any man account for the work of God upon the soul? It is sufficient for me, a poor, unlettered man, to judge of causes by their effects. I should think, Sir,' continued he, 'that there would be no great difficulty to convince any man, who is willing to be convinced, that God, who is a "Spirit," may be able to work upon the spirits, which he hath made, so as to influence their thoughts, and to direct their conduct, without making their bodily senses necessarily acquainted with his approaches towards them. Do we not find that the superior understanding of one man, by his reasoning and argument, will mightily contribute to direct both the opinion and the conduct of another man in many of the circumstances of life? And if so, it seems but reasonable to believe (especially as God's holy word declares it) that the Spirit of God doth operate upon the mind, by his powerful, though invisible agency, so as to awaken the souls of whom he pleases

from sin to salvation, and from the power of Satan unto God.

'But, Sir,' continued Robin, 'be this as it may, the fact in my instance is certain. Such awful views of eternity were presented to my mind on that bed of sickness, such a renewal of mind was wrought in me, and such an alteration of conduct became the consequence of it, that like the poor man in the gospel, whose eyes the Lord Jesus had opened, I can only say as he did, though I know not how or by what means it was accomplished, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

'And that this change is real and not imaginary,' continued the poor man, 'all who know me can witness. My former companions, who were among the dissolute and profane, I can no longer associate with. The people of God, who were before mine and the drunkard's song, I now consider the excellent of the earth. The Lord's day, which before was my greatest burden, and which for the most part I spent in sauntering and folly, is now considered by me as the most precious and invaluable of the seven; every portion of which in the intervals of public worship, I find but too short for the instruction of myself and family. And you know, Sir, that with respect to my moral conversation, no neighbour can reproach me. My wife and children are the happy partakers of this change. Blessed be the gracious Author of all, though I say it myself,' continued Robin, 'yet it is not the less true, few poor people are more happy than we are!'

'Well, my happy neighbour,' replied the gentleman, 'by whatever cause the change is wrought, I see and rejoice in the fruits of it, and sincerely hope that it will always continue.'

'Of that,' answered Robin, 'my God is too faithful for me to doubt. He that called me first by his grace, will not, I am well persuaded, in any period, leave me

to perish by my folly. Let who will question this doctrine, I cannot. And in my notion, Sir,' said Robin, 'though I am a poor man, it is but a just tribute to God's wisdom and omnipotence to think thus favourably of both. For his wisdom is concerned to finish that which he begins. And his omnipotence is engaged to perfect the work which his wisdom thought right. And, therefore, "having begun the good work in my heart, surely he will complete it unto the day of his coming."

'And only, Sir,' continued the poor man, 'consider the force of this reasoning in my own history. Was it not grace which sought me on my bed of sickness, when I neither sought God nor considered the want of him? Was it not distinguishing grace which wrought upon my heart by means of affliction, since many lie down on beds of sickness, and rise again unbenefited by the visitation? Now, Sir,' added Robin, 'if grace, distinguishing grace, wrought all this upon my heart, at a time when I knew not what grace meant, nor ever had prayed for it, will the Lord leave me now, when grace is dearer to me than life, and is continually implored by me more than my daily bread? Besides, Sir, by tracing back effects to their causes, do I not see that all this must proceed from a first cause, and that God's glory, in the purpose of salvation, is the prime mover of all that follows. Hence, therefore, "God's counsel must stand, and he will do all his pleasure." Having loved his people with an "everlasting love," they are saved and called with an holy calling, and being justified by his grace, they are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." Thus God's glory is secured; the Redeemer's purchase is made effectual, and the Spirit's work is liable to no failure or disappointment. And as an apostle says, "We are bound to give thanks always to God, because God hath, from the beginning, chosen his people to salvation, through

sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth," 2 Thess. ii. 13. Thus, Sir, I have given you a brief account of my history, and this is poor Robin's creed.'

EXPLANATION OF THE TRINITY.

'Pray, my friend, (said a gentleman who overheard poor Robin instructing his family on the subject of the christian faith) do you believe in the doctrine of the Trinity?'

'Most certainly, Sir,' answered the poor man, 'for I know it to be true.' 'You *know* it to be true!' replied the gentleman, 'that is more than I ever heard any one before venture to say. Can you then, my friend, undertake to explain to me, how *three* can be *one*, and *one* can be *three*?'

'It is not necessary surely,' answered Robin, 'to explain the mode of existence of the divine persons in the Godhead, in order to apprehend their operations; neither is this proposed as an article of faith to be explained. Men with *finite* capacities cannot be supposed to account for *infinite* perfections. But I hope, Sir, (continued the poor man,) you will allow, that there is a mighty difference between my being able to explain how God exists, and the being able to prove from the certainty of his operations, that he doth exist.' 'Certainly,' answered the gentleman, 'the difference is essential.' 'Well then, Sir,' replied Robin, 'as you and I both confess that the existence of God is proved from his works in the world of nature, it is on the same principle I prove, that God doth exist in a three-fold character of person, from his respective operations in the world of grace. And the confirmation of this doctrine is derived both from the express testimony of scripture, and the corresponding experience in the hearts of regenerate men.'

'I should be very glad,' replied the gentleman, 'to hear you give proof of this doctrine from the testimonies you mention.'

'That I can very easily,' answered Robin, 'if it be necessary. And indeed, Sir, (continued he) if you will condescend to listen to my poor feeble representations upon a subject of this important nature, I venture to believe, that my account of what I call the practical proofs of this glorious doctrine, may be found more conclusive and satisfactory than all the laboured attempts of learned men in their mathematical demonstrations of it. Only, Sir, (continued Robin) allow me to assume, what I take for granted you will not deny, that scripture testimony is valid on the subject; and I shall then hope that you will admit also, as an additional and collateral testimony, the corresponding experience of the human heart to be a second and practical proof of the same glorious truth, and that both together concur to testify the same thing, that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." '

'Pray begin, my friend,' answered the gentleman, I am impatient to hear what you have to advance on the subject.'

'Without detaining you,' replied Robin, 'with those common-place observations which more or less abound in the remarks which every writer on the subject hath brought forward, I shall take it for granted that you are acquainted with those scriptures, which plainly assert, that in the unity of the divine essence there are three persons existing; and that you are in possession of those evidences, which plainly and equally attribute to each of those persons the same distinctions of character, and the same perfections of the Godhead.'

'I have read all these,' replied the gentleman, 'with due attention.' 'Well then,' continued Robin, 'I shall have only, in addition to those testimonies, to bring before you what the same holy scriptures declare, concerning the exercise of all divine perfections by each of the sacred persons of the Godhead, as they refer to us and our nature: and next to this, the personal expe-

rience of the faithful concerning them in the heart of each individual, who is made the happy partaker of their favours, to confirm the glorious doctrine; and both will, I hope, prove to you, what I first said, that my faith in this doctrine is founded in a perfect knowledge of its truth.'

'I desire you, my friend,' cried the gentleman, 'to begin, for I long to hear your remarks.'

'In respect to the first of these evidences; the exercise of the divine perfections, by each of the sacred persons of the Godhead, as they refer to us and our nature, it is declared in scripture, that in the *creation* of man each person of the Godhead concurred. Hence it is said in Gen. i. 27. "God (the Father) created man." In Coloss. i. 16. it is said, that "all things were created by Jesus Christ." Yet that we might not lose sight of the joint co-operation of God the Holy Ghost, in this act of divine power, Job saith, "the Spirit of God hath made me," ch. xxxiii. 4. In like manner is the glorious work of *redemption* performed; the Father is represented in scripture as saying, "I am thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel," Isa. xli. 14. But the song which John heard the glorified inhabitants of eternity sing, was particularly addressed to the Lord Jesus. "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood," Rev. v. 9. And yet since redemption was not wrought without the concurring operation of the Holy Ghost, another sacred writer was commissioned to say, that "Christ offered himself to God through the eternal Spirit," Heb. ix. 14. So once more, in the great work of *sanctification*, the apostle Jude says, that believers are "sanctified by God the Father," Jude 1. St. Paul says, that "they are sanctified by Christ," Heb. ii. 11. And elsewhere he ascribes "sanctification to the Holy Ghost," Rom. xv. 16. And as in grace so in glory: the *resurrection* of the faithful is expressly ascribed to

the joint operation of the eternal Three. As " the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them," John v. 21. so in the same verse it is said, that " the Son quickeneth whom he will." And in the next chapter it is said to be " the Spirit that quickeneth," John vi. 63.

' Now, Sir,' added the poor man, ' is not the doctrine of the Trinity most fully confirmed and proved by these unanswerable evidences? and must it not follow that whoever believes the scripture really and heartily, must believe this also?'

' I confess,' answered the gentleman, ' what you have advanced seems to be incontrovertible: the conviction of the one folds within it the conviction of the other also. But now, my friend, (continued the gentleman,) let me hear the other corresponding testimony you speak of; *personal* experience, as the result of the operations of each of the sacred persons on the human heart.'

' Of that testimony,' replied the poor man, ' I bless God, I am also in possession. I have positive proof, in my own experience, of the peculiar work of God the Father in my heart, since the Lord Jesus saith, " None can come to me except the Father draw him." Now that I am come to Jesus for pardon and acceptance is certain; for I am convinced, that " there is salvation in no other; neither is there any name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Hence, therefore, if this could not arise but from the Father's drawing, then certain it is, that I am thereby drawn to Christ, and therefore both that scripture, and the corresponding one of the prophet, are fulfilled in my experience, viz. " I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee," Jer. xxxi. 3. And, in proof of the personal operation of the Son's divine grace on my heart, a multitude of testimonies might be brought; but the apostle John

furnisheth one which may be cited in the place of a thousand: "We know, (saith the apostle) "that the Son of God is come; for he hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John v. 20. Now, Sir, (added the poor man) from the same divine teaching I know, as well as the apostle, (and so do all true believers in Christ,) that the Son of God is come; for he hath given me the same understanding to know him to be the way, the truth, and the life. And this testimony of scripture, confirmed by experience, is strengthened also by another: "At that day ye shall know (saith Christ) that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you," John xiv. 20. And, lastly, concerning the personal operation of the Holy Ghost on the heart; though all the offices of "quickening, illuminating, convincing, converting, building up, and establishing believers in the truth," are peculiarly his, and proofs in the heart of those where such works are wrought, might be produced in testimony of my present assertion, from every one of them: yet I shall take a shorter method, and only advert to one, which the apostle produceth, as an ample confirmation of the point: "No man (says St. Paul) can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. xii. 3. Now, Sir, as I do, from the deepest and most satisfying conviction of my soul, believe that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is one with the Father, "over all, God blessed for ever;" if scripture is to be depended on, I must have been taught this by the Holy Ghost; and therefore in this, as well as in a multitude of other instances, I am a living witness of the personal operation of God the Holy Ghost upon my heart, and consequently of the doctrine of the Trinity.

'Thus, Sir, (added Robin,) I have proved to you on what ground it is that I told you I *knew* the doctrine

of the Trinity to be true: and hence it will appear, that the scripture is fulfilled in my experience; "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself," 1 John v. 10.'

'Well, Robin,' answered the gentleman, when the poor man had finished, 'I know not what to say in reply to your observations. Though I confess your arguments are too well founded on sound principles of reason to be refused; yet, as I have never experienced any thing of the kind in my own heart, I own I am rather disposed to dispute the doctrine.'

'Ah! Sir,' replied the poor man, 'I know too well from my own former experience, this to be the case: for, Sir, I did not, I assure you, speedily learn it under my divine Teacher; but my stubborn will long fought against the conviction of it. But, (added Robin) he that convinced me, can as easily convince you; and I most heartily pray that he may; for the firm persuasion of this blessed truth will make you truly happy. You cannot think how very happy it makes me.'

'Indeed I believe you are,' answered the gentleman, 'every thing about you seems to wear this aspect: and if the knowledge of the doctrine you speak of be capable of conferring such happiness, I wish I had the same conviction of it also.'

'I am very glad,' rejoined Robin, 'to hear you say so: for, Sir, the desire of knowing it is one step at least towards it; and let me beg of you, Sir, (added he) to remember this one thing: that if you truly *desire* to seek the truth, as grace must have prompted this desire, depend upon it, grace will satisfy the desire of its own creating; and in God's time, which is always the best time, he will bring it to good effect.'

'Well, my good friend,' answered the gentleman, 'I am bound to thank you at least for your kind wishes upon the occasion, and if it tends to make me happy,

as you say it hath made you, I could wish that not only you and I possessed such treasure, but that it was generally known and generally enjoyed.'

'If it were the will of God,' replied Robin, 'I could rejoice that it were; for no heart can fully conceive how great and extensive the blessing is. Only, Sir,' added the poor man, 'figure to yourself the happiness of the man who lives in the habitual enjoyment of having God the Holy Ghost for his teacher, and is in "fellowship with God the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."'

'I cannot,' answered the gentleman, 'enter into a proper apprehension of the enjoyment you speak of, because I have no right conception of the distinction you mention.'

'Sir,' replied Robin, 'are not christians baptized in the joint name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost! And is not this by the express command of the great Author of our holy faith! And doth not the apostle Paul pronounce a blessing upon them, in the same joint authority, when he saith, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, amen," 2 Cor. xiii. 14. And cannot you suppose, that true believers know what it is to enjoy *grace* in the person, in the character, in the offices of the Lord Jesus Christ, considered as the Redeemer, the Mediator, the Intercessor, the Brother, the Husband, the Prophet, Priest, and King of his church and people; distinct from the personal enjoyment they have in that everlasting love of God the Father, and in the sweet and endearing offices of God the Holy Ghost, as the Comforter, the Teacher, the Spirit of truth, of grace, of supplication, and the like, in which he reveals himself to the Lord's people? Oh, Sir, did you but know what I know of those precious things, and feel what I feel upon the occasion, you would be convinced, that no felicity of

mind upon earth can be equal to it! When the soul is truly thus taught of God, and brought home to him, to live upon him, it is all "joy and peace in believing, through the power of the Holy Ghost."'

'Well, my kind friend,' answered the gentleman, 'I hope, like "Mary to ponder these things in my heart;" and if, as you say, the desire of grace, be grace, I trust that God will give increasing grace, that I may be a partaker in your knowledge, and in your happiness.'

'May the Lord grant it,' replied Robin, and thus they parted.

## XXXIII.

### THE HAPPY COTTAGE; OR, THE HISTORY OF FARMER JOHN.

I have often heard, and sometimes read of cottage happiness, but I never saw an instance of it, neither did I understand the secret of attaining it, until I learnt it from the family of farmer John.

The poor man himself, was not what the world would call a stocky farmer; for his farm (and it was a rented farm) was but small, and therefore the product of it could not be very great. But whatever it was, he made a shift to live upon it; and evidently with much more happiness than some did, whose estates were twenty times larger. There were several features of character in the farmer's mind, for which he was remarkable. No one could reproach him with dishonesty; for, to a proverb it was said of him, whenever at any time the neighbours had occasion to commend a man's honesty, and to make a comparison of it, as is very usual with another, they would say, 'he is as honest as farmer John.' And with respect to his behaviour in the village, it could not but get him the good will of every body; for he was the most peaceable, kind, and gentle creature in the world. Not even the worthless could provoke him to quarrel. But what gave the finishing lustre to the character of farmer John, was his regular and uniform conduct in religion. You might be sure to see the farmer, with his whole family, at the house of God on the Sunday, at the stated times of worship, unless prevented by sickness, all of them dressed in plain and neat apparel, suited to their circumstances. The poor man used to say, that if a man really loved God, he would love God's house; if the love of God was formed in his heart, the praise of God would be heard from his lips.

There was one feature more in farmer John's character, which astonished every body; and that was, that he kept himself so much at home, and among his own family. He was never seen at the village ale-house; nor indeed at any other, except business called him there. Hence, therefore, village revels, fairs, country wakes, and the like, which the dark and ignorant age of popish idolatry first introduced into the country parishes of the kingdom, and which the present professing age of knowledge hath not yet manifested sufficient wisdom to do away; these things never tempted farmer John or his household. He thought, and, no doubt, thought very rightly, that the setting apart Easter and Whitsun holidays, Trinity Monday, and such seasons, for the brutish pastimes which distinguish country villages, was not only a perversion of holy seasons, to the most unholy of purposes; but that they were disgraceful to the very nature of man. He had read that passage of the apostle's (and by the way, the reader, if he hath not read it in the same point of view farmer John did, would do well to read it again) that among "the works of the flesh, are envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God," Gal. v. 21. The farmer used to observe, upon these occasions, what many beside the farmer have had reason to their sorrow to confess, to be but too true; that 'these things tended only to the corruption and profligacy of young men, and to the seduction and ruin of young women.' And the honest farmer, when sometimes he hath been asked the reason why he did not do as his neighbours did, and go to the fairs and wakes, and the like, would say, 'If men found the happiness at home, which he did in his family, they need not go abroad to seek for it, and in places where it is not to be found.' And the farmer would add, 'if at any time I wish to make a holiday, I like to make it in my own house. It makes

the pleasure doubly sweet, when my wife and children partake of it with me.' Reader, mark this—how exceedingly to be wished is it, that every father of a family, whether he be a farmer or in any other line of life, rich or poor, could be brought to the same way of thinking as farmer John. For if all houses in domestic life were like his, we should not see so many worthless husbands, and so many unnatural fathers as we now see, who spend their time and their substance abroad, while their families at home are in want. Neither, it may be added, on the other hand, would there be so many wretched wives and poor children, if women did not by their ill-management and unkind behaviour, provoke their husbands to go abroad to seek that pleasure they cannot find at home. Is it to be wondered at, if, when men return from their labour they are met with unkindness by their wives, and no provision made for their comfort, that they should depart again? I wish, that if any poor woman who reads this, and who is complaining of her misfortune by reason of an untoward husband, would ask her own heart whether she has not cause to blame also her own untoward behaviour, in those respects towards him. Depend upon it, if you make home more agreeable than an ale-house, or a tavern, that man must be worthless indeed, who then runs to either to seek his comfort.

But, to return. I had heard so much of farmer John, and his happy cottage, that I was determined to search out the truth of it, and to discover, if possible, the secret by what means it was made so happy. I concluded with myself, that if one poor man had discovered the happy heart of real enjoyment, in a world of so much sorrow as the present, others, in like manner, by adopting his plan, might, under the divine blessing, do the same. I therefore made a visit to the farmer's cottage, and the result of what I learnt, I have thought worth while to lay before the public. The reader will be

pleased to observe, that it is rather the history of what real piety is able to produce, than what, in all instances, it hath produced. Many abatements are to be made to the fancy pictures and sketches of human life! The purpose of the writer will be abundantly answered, if one father of a family shall be prevailed upon, from farmer John's history, to make experiment of the plan he adopted. And if the reader be any way improved, the writer will find cause to bless God for the design.

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'You must be told, Sir,' said the farmer, (for I beg to introduce the honest man, as relating his own tale) 'that some few years since, through the mercy of God, I was brought to a sense of the real importance of religion, and the care of the soul. If you desire to know how this great change was wrought upon me, I can only say, that I am sure it must have been God's goodness, and not my desert. Under the preaching of our worthy vicar, in a sermon of his, I found my mind affected, in a way of seriousness, such as I never before experienced. And from that time I date the beginning of my happiness, and with it the happiness of my family. For till this time, to my shame be it spoken, we all lived as without God in the world. Family prayer, reading the scriptures, religious conversation, and the like, which since have become such matter of real enjoyment to my heart, were never once thought on by either of us. Not that we wholly stayed away from the house of God, for perhaps we went there as often as our neighbours. But then in going there we thought consisted the whole of religion, that it was Sunday, and that it was customary to put on our best clothes, and go to church on that day as others did, made up the whole of my religion. Indeed, I liked to go, for as soon as service was over, I enjoyed what I was very fond of,

a peal on the bells, being considered as good a ringer as any one in twenty parishes. And sometimes I have found the church-yard an excellent place for transacting business. Many a bargain have I made there; and indeed our whole parish contrived, for the most part, to settle all their affairs there on the Sunday.'

Pause, reader! over the farmer's account, and say, whether it be not suited to many a farmer in many a village beside his. I believe there are not a few, who for want of thinking, fall into the error; and like the herd of cattle, which naturally run after one another, follow the multitude to do evil. It would strike any man of common sense that he was guilty of a very great sin if he were to take a pack of cards with him to the church, and after the prayers were over go up into the belfry and sit down to play. And yet tell me if you can, wherein consists the difference between playing on paper and playing with the bells? Few conscientious farmers, I believe, would like to go to the market on a Sunday, to sell their cattle, or to make bargains for their corn; and yet, is the sin less, to do both in the church-yard, over the ashes of our fellow creatures?'

But to return. 'After God was pleased,' said the farmer, 'to open the eyes of my understanding to a proper sense of things, I discovered that true religion consisted in somewhat more than a name. That it was not like a Sunday's dress, to be put on and put off occasionally; but to be always worn, and that, unless it formed a part in the whole character, it could be nothing worth in the sight of God. Under these convictions of mind, through the grace of God, I began a new plan of life in myself, and towards my household. And blessed be the divine mercy, which hath gone before me, and followed me in every step I have taken. My wife, to whom the Lord hath given a seriousness of

mind also, can tell you what an altered man I am; and what a happy family in consequence thereof we are. And what adds to our felicity is, that while we are thus comfortable in the present world, we are looking forward with a sure expectation of happiness, through the merits of our Lord, in another. So sure is that maxim of the apostle's, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

'Perhaps, Sir,' continued the farmer, 'it may not be offensive to you, though it be but the history of a poor, insignificant man as I am, to tell you how we spend our time. One day's account of it will lead you into an acquaintance of the whole; for our days are pretty much the same. You must be told, Sir,' said the farmer, 'that I always make it a point, if possible, to get my whole family up to morning prayers, that before I go forth to my labour, we may implore God's blessing upon us. I have found, by experience, that half an hour given in this way to a gracious God, before I give the whole day to the world, is time well laid out, and will be sure to profit. I have long set this down as an unerring maxim, that the man who sanctifies the first fruits of the morning to the Lord, will not fail to find the Lord sanctifying to him the after productions of the day. And the morning which is begun in prayer, will find cause to end in praise. And, Sir,' added the farmer, 'I have never found, whatever others may say, that half an hour taken from sleep, makes me less able to labour; but, on the contrary, I seem to go forth with more strength and cheerfulness to my employment, from the hope that I have received a morning blessing from my heavenly Father.' Reader! pray observe this.

'You cannot imagine, Sir,' said the farmer, 'what pleasure I enjoy, in the circle of my little family, in those sweet moments when we are all drawing nigh

the mercy-seat. You know, Sir,' said the poor man, 'God hath said in the 21st chapter of the prophecy of Jeremiah, that "He is the God of all the families of Israel;" and therefore I find my heart prompted to look up with an humble hope, that he is the gracious God of my poor family also. And I assure you, Sir,' said the farmer, 'if, through sickness, or any other cause, I am prevented from this employment, of bringing my household before God in prayer, (for sometimes things untoward will arise to prevent it) you cannot think how much dampness I feel upon my spirits, through the whole day. I can truly say to the Lord, with Job, "I have esteemed thy words more than my necessary food," Job xxiii. 12. I endeavour, however, if at any time this happens, to make up the deficiency of family worship, by private prayer; and my little diary of God's promises to his people, which I always carry about me in my pocket for this purpose, affords me some precious portion for every day, which I meditate upon in my labour, and as I walk by the way. At my return to meals, both at breakfast and dinner, I contrive to steal a few minutes from the time allowed me for the refreshment of my body, to refresh also my mind. And so might the poorest labourer in the village if he would, without robbing his master's time. I very well remember how often I have done this, before I knew the Lord, when at any time I had some object of pleasure in view, with what haste have I swallowed down my meat, in order to accomplish that purpose. And therefore, if poor labouring men were as earnest to instruct themselves and their children, as they are in the indulgence of other pleasures, they might always find time.' Reader, pray mark this.

'But our evenings are the principal seasons for family enjoyment; and I question whether king George himself be more happy than I am in the midst of my little household. And on the Lord's day particularly, which

are all golden days with me, we contrive to lose no part of those blessed seasons. It is not enough to go to the house of God; for public worship takes up but a small space in the holy day. And the man that doth not make his own house, an house of prayer and meditation, can have but little relish for God's house. How do I pity those, such as I once was, (blessed be God for the change) who saunter in the church-yard, talking of worldly business, village stories, and sometimes even worse than either; or amuse themselves in ringing of bells, and drinking at the village ale-houses, and the like. Oh! did they but know what I know, and feel what I feel, they would learn to prize the Lord's day as the best of all the seven.

'The method we take, Sir, in our little family, by way of improving our evenings, on the week days, and on the Lord's day, between the times of public worship, is this. My children according to their age, read the bible, say their several catechisms, (particularly that on prayer) repeat their hymns, and the like; and it is a favourite plan with me, to prompt them to ask questions on divine things so as to fill up every portion of our time, that nothing may be lost. And when it becomes time to retire to rest, I conclude the day in prayer and thanksgiving, as every father or master ought to do in the midst of his family. And my wife, also, who is one of the best creatures in the world, doth her part, while I am abroad, to follow the same plan of instruction.

'There is one amusement, if it may be called so, of which we are all very fond, and which serves to keep up a constant source of the most instructive and pleasing nature.'—Reader, pray observe this! 'When, at any time, my children are reading the word of God, if any passage particularly strikes either, we do not do, as is the case with many, read on and think no more about it, but we pause over it, and immediately consult

the Poor Man's Commentary, in order to find out the true meaning.—Mary,' said the farmer to his eldest daughter, a girl about 12 or 13 years of age, who stood near him, 'do you recollect, what it was, last evening, that we were led to suppose, is the meaning of that expression in the 74th Psalm? "Thou breakest the head of the leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness." 'Yes,' answered the girl; 'you said, father, that you supposed the leviathan to be that sea monster, Pharaoh, whom God overthrew in the Red Sea; and, that the remembrance of this wonderful deliverance, which the Lord wrought for Israel, became food for their faith, in their after-trials in the wilderness.' 'True,' replied the father, 'but did not we remark an additional sweetness in this scripture to believers now in their wilderness state?' 'Yes,' answered the child, 'for as that victory God wrought for Israel over Pharaoh and his host, in the Red Sea, was clearly a type of that glorious conquest the Lord Jesus Christ hath accomplished, by his blood, over sin, Satan, and death; so every child of God, whom the Holy Ghost hath brought, through that new and living way of Christ's blood and righteousness to the Father for acceptance; whatever difficulties, or trials, he after meets with in travelling on through any wilderness dispensations, the recollection of that conquest is designed for food to his faith, until the calamity be overpast, for it is said, "the just shall live by faith."

'Harry,' said the farmer, to a boy somewhat younger than his sister, 'let the gentleman hear you repeat the grace your mother taught you to use before meat. And remember what I often remind you of, to pray in prayer. There are many families,' said the farmer, that say grace at their meals, but it is said in such a way, as too plainly proves their gracelessness in the use of it.' The boy stood up, and with much seeming re-

verence, said, 'Blessed Lord, it is thou which hast spread our table with the good things of thy providence to sustain our perishing bodies from day to day. Be pleased, Lord, to feed our souls with that bread of life which endureth for ever. Sit, gracious Saviour, at the head of the table of thine own bounties, and make every blessing doubly sweet, in giving us to see that it comes from thine own hand. Amen.'

'Now, child,' said the father, 'repeat the blessing after meat.'—The boy began. 'We thank thee, heavenly Lord, for this seasonable supply, which many others are without, and of which we are so utterly undeserving. Let every renewed mercy be made the means of bringing our souls nearer to thee. Add one blessing more to what we have now received, and grant that we may be among those which ~~shall~~ eat bread in thy kingdom, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.'

'I will detain you, Sir,' said the honest farmer, 'with hearing my youngest child go through his prayers. He hath learned (though he is but six years old) most of the prayers, which our minister composed, for the use of children. Children cannot (he observed) be too early taught to accustom themselves to go apart once, or oftener, during the course of the day, to pray by themselves: for it serves, under the divine grace, to form in their infant minds an early acquaintance with God.'—Reader! observe this!—

'Charles, my dear,' said the father, 'I hope you have gone apart to-day, while I have been waiting, and prayed for yourself and for me, as I have desired you daily.'—'Yes, father,' said the boy. 'Let the gentleman hear what prayers you use,' said the father.

SHORT PRAYERS FOR THE USE OF LITTLE CHILDREN.

1. Blessed God and Father in Jesus Christ, my Saviour, art thou not my God? grant that I may prepare thee an habitation; and my Father's God; help me then to exalt thee.

2. O Lord, hast thou not said, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, thou wilt perfect praise. Oh! then teach me, a poor child, to praise thee; and since thou hast commanded little children to come unto thee, behold, Lord, I am come. Oh! take me up in thine arms, lay thine hands upon me, and bless me.

3. But, O Lord, thou art holy, and I am unclean; for I was born in sin, and shapen in iniquity. Young as I am, yet I am a transgressor from the womb. Lord, be merciful to me a sinner!

4. Renew me in Christ Jesus, O Lord, and make me thy child by adoption and grace. Lord, grant that I may be born again, and learn to remember thee, my Creator, in the days of my youth.

5. Lord, bless my parents. Be gracious to them, and to all my relations. Oh! give them that knowledge, which may make them all wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in Jesus Christ.

6. Prepare me, O Lord, for thine own will and pleasure. While I live, may I live to thy glory; and when I die, Lord, grant that I may sleep in Jesus. Amen.

When the child had finished, the farmer said, 'now these are among the methods which we adopt towards the attainment of real happiness. And I do assure you, Sir, there is not, there cannot be a happier cottage, nor a happier family than our's is upon earth.'

Reader! pause once more for all, over what you have now read. And recollect, that the happiness of farmer John is not confined to cottage or house; it hath nothing to do with town or country. As true happi-

ness can alone be found in the knowledge of God, wherever this knowledge is formed in the heart, there is true happiness. "This is life eternal (saith one that could not be mistaken) to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." If God the Spirit regenerates the heart and forms the man anew in Christ Jesus, whether he be servant or master, bond or free, rich or poor, parent or child; thus having farmer John's maxims wrought by grace in the mind, farmer John's happiness will follow.

May the Lord give the reader grace, and the writer mercy, that both may experience this blessed work in the heart to their own joy, and the Lord's glory, in Jesus Christ. Amen.

## XXXIV.

### HARVEST HOME; OR, SEQUEL TO THE HISTORY OF FARMER JOHN.

The public hath been already informed of 'The History of Farmer John.' His 'Happy Cottage,' I have been told, hath afforded much pleasure to many a reader in the relation; and, for the further gratification of such minds, it struck me, that they would be equally gratified if I related to them the account of the farmer's harvest home, which took place in the last most delightful and highly favoured season.

Every one knows what a lovely time it then was for the gathering in of the fruits of the earth; and all minds, I should hope, were disposed to acknowledge the gracious hand of God in the mercy. But few farmhouses afford characters like farmer John, to improve the mercies in the manner he doth, to the glory of the great Giver.

The farmer well knew how much I should be pleased to be present at the time of his harvest, and therefore, a little while before the proposed time of cutting his corn, he sent me an invitation.

I am free to say, that I looked forward to the period with very particular pleasure; for I had seen enough of the poor man in my former short visit, to form an opinion that it would open a source of much enjoyment; and I was not disappointed of my hope.

The day proved, as most of the days of the present harvest season have been, very beautiful and lovely; and at my arrival at the happy cottage, I found honest John prepared to make suitable reflections upon it.

The honest man received me with all that cheerfulness which carried with it the assurance of an hearty welcome. 'A glorious day (I said) for your harvest,

farmer.' 'Yes! (he answered) God is very gracious, according to his promise. He hath said, "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease," Gen. viii. 22. And here we have a proof of the merciful promise being fulfilled to this very day. And he that affords suited weather for seed-time, suits his weather to the harvest also. The Lord's goodness finds occasion, in men's wants, to display itself. Though the promise is almost as old as the creation, yet it is as new in its accomplishment to us this day, as though it was but this day delivered. And may we not add, (ought we not, indeed, to add?) that if the promises of our God, respecting the order of nature, be so confirmed and made good, will not the promises of our God in Christ, respecting the things of grace, be fulfilled also? Doth the Lord thus remember his covenant, for the body, and will he forget his covenant, confirmed as it is by an oath, for the soul?'

'But, farmer,' 'I said, 'do you not sometimes find what is called a *catching harvest?*' 'O yes, Sir, replied the honest man; we are frequently obliged to use double diligence upon those occasions. The day is not always as it is now, all sunshine; but then I have never found that maxim fail — 'He that watcheth God's providence, will never want a God of providence to watch him.' There is a great deal of sound policy, as well as sound religion, in living by faith. Solomon saith, "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap," Eccles. xi. 4. By what I understand is meant, that while we look to second causes, (for clouds and winds are no other) instead of looking to the first grand cause of all, which is, the Maker of these instruments, we never shall do what is right. The man that puts off his sowing season because of the flying wind, or defers gathering in his corn when it is ripe, because of the

falling shower, will frequently have to lament his being more weather-wise than over-wise.

The plan I make use of is, to watch the Lord's time, which is the best time. I mean when the Lord hath, by the kind influence of rain and sun, ripened the corn, then I consider this is the call of the Lord to put in the sickle. And I have never found but that the same grace which "gives us rain from heaven," gives us also "fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness," Acts xiv. 7.

Neither need I blush to say, that I seek direction from heaven for these things.' 'What do you mean, farmer?' I replied. 'Why, Sir,' answered the honest man, 'before I enter upon our harvest, I make it a subject of prayer, that my God would guide me in this, as in every other concern. For so runs the promise, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and he will direct thy paths," Prov. iii. 6. In an humble dependence upon the truth of this scripture, as soon as the golden ears of the corn begin to drop their heads towards the earth, I interpret this token as a sign for reaping.

And why should it not be so? Is it not said, "that in every thing by prayer and supplications, with thanksgiving, we should make our requests known unto God?" Is it not by such means we prove our God to be a prayer-hearing, and a prayer-answering God? Are we not told, in the instance of Elias, how much the Lord hath suspended his blessings upon the prayers of his people? And this man of God, partaking as he did, in common with us, of the frailties of our nature, is spoken of on purpose to convince God's people, that the grace of our heavenly Father is not called forth, or restrained, by their worthiness, or their undeserving. "Elias (saith the apostle) was a man subject to the like passions as we are. And he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the

heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruits," James v. 17, 18.

Here, therefore, we conceive, we are not only authorised, but commanded, to bring every thing before a mercy-seat, and leave the event with God. Prayer is the key of heaven, it pierceth the clouds. And as our dear Lord commanded his disciples, in relation to spiritual husbandmen, and the harvest of souls in his church, to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into his harvest; so I look up, in respect to the natural in-gathering of the fruits of the earth, and both pray for labourers, and for direction in the best of time of employing them, that the Lord of our mercies would send them forth into our harvest.'

How far the farmer would have gone on in his discourse, I know not, for his heart was quite warm with it, as the glow upon his countenance plainly shewed. But one of his young men came to inform him, that the reapers were waiting for him in the field. 'Come, Sir, (said the farmer) if you can find any pleasure in looking on upon our labours, we will go. My men have been all engaged since the morning light, and a large crop we have already gathered, and I hope, with the blessing of God upon our hands, we shall sing harvest home at night.'

'I will follow you, my honest friend,' I replied, 'for I came purposely to visit you with this view.' So saying, we hastened to the field.

I was wonderfully struck and pleased with the cheerfulness which manifested itself in the faces of John's workmen. Every thing testified their happiness. And though, no doubt, the toil was great, yet there appeared to be no sign as if they thought so.

I took notice of it to the honest farmer; and he observed that the circumstance was very true, and noticed by the word of God. 'The joy of harvest (said John) is joined with the joy of victory in battle: "They joy

before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil," Isaiah ix. 3. That is, God's people rejoice when brought into the favour of the Lord, as harvest-men, when reaping the fruits of their labours; or as soldiers, when dividing the spoil after victory. Such are the precious enjoyments of salvation, producing plenty and triumph. And by and by, in the evening, when my men have come to bind up the last sheaf, which they call cutting the neck, you will hear shouting enough.

I was rather apprehensive that my presence would break in unseasonable, and interrupt the labours of the people, if I called off the honest farmer's attention so much, as he seemed, by his discourse, willing to give me; I therefore told him I would amuse myself in walking round the ground, while he followed up his business with his people. So, leaving him for a space, I took a turn to a part of his ground, where I might look on, and not interrupt him.

I could not help reflecting, while beholding the unwearied labours of the reapers, what a beautiful representation it affordeth of the unremitting attention of the christian. The farmer's work admits of no interruption; neither doth the christian's. And is not the life of angels a life of unceasing activity? Are we not told, that day and night they are engaged in glorious errands of mercy, or in the constant service of God and the Lamb?

There was another thought which crossed my mind, on beholding what a number of hands were engaged in one and the same employment. So, in the field of God's churches, it is said, that the Lord hath appointed "some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the work of the ministry, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ;" and in heaven, the servants of our God are said to be a multitude whom no man could number.

The service of the field hath also another eminent distinction. It is both the most simple, artless, and innocent; and, at the same time, the most excellent, useful, and honourable.

In the first ages of primitive simplicity, the culture of their lands, and the attention to their cattle, made up all their riches. "The king himself (Solomon saith) is served by the field;" meaning, no doubt, that he cannot do without it. And the most distinguished characters among men, have thought it no disparagement to be so employed. History relates, that when the Roman senate sent a deputation to invite Atticus to the government of the commonwealth, the ambassadors found him sowing corn in his field.

But what struck my mind most of all, while ruminating on what I saw of the labourers in the field, was the reflection, how much of the Lord's presence appeared in the in-gathering of the fruits of the earth, and how exceedingly it manifested the truth of that scripture, "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."

Those sweet words of the church crossed my mind in the moment I considered the Lord's sovereignty and the Lord's presence, and their beauty appeared very striking. "Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon: he let out the vineyard unto keepers. Every one, for the fruit thereof, was to bring a thousand pieces of silver. My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred," Sol. Song viii. 11, 12.

Jesus, no doubt, is the Solomon here spoken of; for a greater than Solomon, king of Israel, is here. And his vineyard is his church, which is doubtless his, both as his Father's gift and his own purchase. It is situated at Baal-hamon, which means, "the Lord of a multitude;" for all nations shall call him blessed. His vineyard, or church, is his own corn-field of gracious souls, planted by himself, and always before him: for he is

present with his people always, even unto the end of the world. And it implies not only his presence, and his knowledge, but his love, and his care, and watchfulness over his people. He says elsewhere, "I the Lord do keep it: I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it. I will keep it night and day," Isaiah xxvii. 3. And though he hath let out his vineyard to such keepers, which act as servants, and masters, and stewards, in his church, under him, for the service of God's husbandry, yet his own care is not relaxed the less on this account, neither will his revenue be diminished; for though he graciously affords every diligent servant to partake of the fruit of his labours, yet, while the proportion of two hundred is theirs, a thousand is his. In short, the whole is his, both in grace and in glory. But all the labourers will have the penny presented to them for their hire, in the evening of the day, when the Lord calleth home his servants; and "every one (as an apostle hath said) shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour," 1 Cor. iii. 8.

The day passed insensibly away, while my mind was occupied in beholding and reflecting, so that the reapers had finished their labours, and cut the neck, as the farmer called it, before I was aware, which their loud shouts of joy manifested.

The honest man came to me to tell me of it, and to say also, that he hoped I would honour his habitation with my company to sing harvest home. 'My people,' added the farmer, 'will, I am sure, be much gratified in your company; and, as what I have is at your service, I hope you will not say nay, but spend the evening with us.'

It was the very thing I wished; for I longed, above all things, to see how a man of John's piety and morals would celebrate harvest home. I had hoped, indeed, that he had grace enough to make a wide difference from the noisy and too frequent drunken revels of the

unthinking class of farmers; and therefore I did not hesitate to tell the honest man that I accepted his kind invitation. We hastened from the field to the house, where we found a very plentiful table, spread for the accommodation of the reapers, and the honest farmer followed up his usual custom of making one of his children say the grace before meat. The same was observed after supper, as hath been already recorded in the 'Happy Cottage,' which, for shortness sake, I omit now.

As soon as the cloth was removed, and the whole party prepared for festivity, the honest farmer, turning to me, said, 'I have invited our church singers to spend the evening with us, that our minds may be refreshed with singing, as well as speaking the praises of the Lord. We have a good choir, Sir, added the honest man; and when men sing with the spirit, and sing with the understanding also, I am led to believe it is a very laudable method of testifying our gratitude to heaven.

'There are some of my neighbours (added the farmer) that wish our singers to sing other things beside sacred music; but methinks it is a pity that the same lips which sound God's praise, should sing man's profaneness. Out of the same fountain never should flow sweet water and bitter.'

'Come, my friends,' said the farmer, 'begin your song of harvest home.' They did so, and sung in a very pleasing, and, as I thought, some of them, at least, in a pious manner, the following:

HARVEST HOME we sing to-day,
Now the Lord hath crown'd our toil;
Well may ev'ry heart be gay,
Well may ev'ry face now smile!

And first to Thee our voice we raise;
To Thee the sheaf of off'ring bring;
We wave it, Lord, to thy sole praise;
To thy sole glory, Lord, we sing.

The Lord kind seasons still affords,
The summer's heat, and fruitful show'rs;
Surely the praise shall be the Lord's,
While all the benefit is ours.

In hope we sow'd, nor was it lost,
The seed, when scatter'd o'er the plain,
Thou didst secure it from the frost,
Nor suffer aught to hurt the grain.

And now we've reap'd, what other theme
But Jesus, shall our songs employ?
What shall we sing, or say, but him,
Who gives us all things to enjoy?

One blessing more, Lord, give us now,
That, while our bodies they are fed
With food that perisheth below,
Our souls may live on heavenly bread.

Jesus, thou bread of life, be still
Our portion, till thy kingdom come,
Then in that better world we will,
With purer note, sing harvest home!

When the song was ended, the farmer desired his eldest son to read the twenty-third chapter of the book of Leviticus; 'that we may hear, (says he) in what manner the Lord commanded the church in the wilderness to celebrate harvest home.' The boy did as his father had bidden; and when he had finished, the farmer observed upon it, that if under the dark dispensation by Moses, the first fruits were thus offered to the Lord, 'well (added he) may we, now we are come to the bright discoveries of God's mercies by Jesus, wave the sheaf of corn before our God, as a token both of prayer and praise, that of him we receive it, and to his glory we ought to use it. It is he which clothes our fields with corn, and both gives us food, and health, and appetites to enjoy it. I would desire, therefore, to honour the Lord with the first fruits of all my substance, and while enjoying the gift, much more enjoy the Giver.'

'Come, my friends, (said the farmer) suppose, instead of employing our time in idle and frothy conversation, we were to fill up the rest of the evening with discourse tending to profit.

'I will propose to you a question, and let us see who will first answer it.

'Why is corn-seed like the grace of God?' The company all paused, and the farmer proceeded.

'Is it not because both are the gift of God? Both depend upon his goodness to bless, and both terminate in their usefulness to his glory.

'And as the corn is cast into the heart of the earth, which is ploughed to receive it; and as the corn is covered up and hidden, and apparently, for a time, lost to observation; and though frost and chilling winds, though birds attempt to pick it up, and beasts to tread it down, yet, under the blessing of the rain and dew, and sunshine, it at length springs up and flourisheth, and brings forth abundantly. So grace in the heart of man, which the blessed Spirit hath harrowed, and prepared for it, however hidden from view, and however exposed to the cold and chilling frames of the human mind itself, or the ravages of the enemy, still, under his warmth who is the Sun of Righteousness, and his gentle refreshments, which are like the tender rain upon the earth, it ripens, and brings forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty.

'I will propose another question to you,' added the farmer; 'and see if you can unriddle it.

'Wherein doth a diligent husbandman resemble a faithful minister?'

They all paused, as before;—and the honest man explained.

'Because the one, like the other, hath no idle time upon his hands. Because, as the farmer is supposed daily to be looking over his ground, so the minister of Christ is to be daily looking after his people. Because each is a life of great labour, watchfulness, and great anxiety. Because neither are supposed to begrudge their pains, in hopes of a glorious return. Because the tenant of the farm must, at the end of the year, pay his

rent to his lord; and the minister is supposed to watch for souls, as one that must give an account of his stewardship.

'Think, then, my friends, (cried the farmer) what an honourable, as well as useful life ours is, which bears so striking a resemblance to the sacred order; and let us learn to bless our God, who hath so placed us in this world, that, while labouring for the things of time, furnisheth us with improving-thoughts, which may make us wise unto all eternity. Blessed God! (he added) do thou give me and mine grace to see this, and know it; and while thou art graciously meeting us in the path of duty, and teaching us how we may profit by almost every object which concerns us, and in which we are engaged; do thou open our eyes and our hearts with desires to meet thee, and to enjoy thy presence and thy blessings in all our employments!'

The whole evening was spent much in the same manner, with improving questions and observations. And upon my leaving the farmer's house, I could not help exclaiming, happy man! happy family! how different are your harvest days to those of many others, which, for the most part, are carried on in folly, and end in drunkenness.

Reader! learn, from what hath been related, how to convert God's blessings to God's glory. Every man, like farmer John, if his mind be like his, under the impressions of grace, may find, in his own history, continual seasons of *harvest.* And if, while God's mercies come down, our hearts send up the *sheaf-offering* of praise, this will keep open an unceasing intercourse between heaven and earth; for this will be truly to have "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." May the Lord grant it to both writer and reader! and the end of this little publication will be answered.

## XXXV.

### THE COTTAGE FUNERAL.

I was crossing the church yard at the moment of a funeral.—There is somewhat in the view of death which always arrests the attention. Other objects, for the most part, are general or particular, as they relate to the parties more immediately interested in them. But death hath an universal claim. The passenger going by is, or ought to be, as highly concerned in the prospect as "the mourners which go about the streets."

I paused as I beheld the procession.—Here (said I to myself, as I contemplated the sight) is one more of death's victims. The soul hath been turned out of its house, and the tenement in which it dwelt will be left here to moulder.—But whither is the soul fled? Hath it taken refuge in the bosom of Jesus?—The question recoiled upon my own mind as I asked it. Reader! what answer could you now make to it, supposing (as will very shortly be the case,) that it concerned yourself?

The friends attending this funeral were very numerous, though evidently of the poorer sort. Pray, said I to one of the party that passed near me, who is the person buried? 'A king's daughter,' answered he. A king's daughter! thought I, what can he mean? But he went on too hastily for me to question him further. I was struck in the view of the multitude surrounding the grave.—Perhaps, said I to myself, there may be some here who, in the very moment that they are so busily engaged in attending another's funeral, are undressing, however unconscious of it, for their own. It would be a very suitable question to be proposed at the close of every funeral, whose turn is the next? Nay, thought I, it may be mine.—Reader, it

may be your's.—Many of the pins of my poor weather-beaten tabernacle have already fallen out. I see, I know, that the house is taking gradually down, if an unexpected storm should not throw it suddenly into ruins altogether.—Am I ready?—Reader, are *you*?

The funeral of a king's daughter is not to be seen every day, said I to myself; suppose I attend the service. The account the man gave me of this person, had raised my curiosity. Nay, I hope, it was somewhat more than a mere curiosity; it came from a purer source. Was it not thy grace, O Lord, that inclined my heart to do it?

As I drew near the grave, my mind ruminated on the character of a king's daughter. I recollected that David had marked the features of the king's daughter, that she is "all glorious within." And I remembered that it is said of Jesus, "he hath made his people kings and priests unto God and the Father." Probably, said I to myself, the person now to be interred is one of those; and if so, she is indeed a king's daughter, and more glorious within than her coffin would be without, though it were made of solid gold, the hinges of diamonds, and every nail a pearl.

I could not be mistaken in what followed. When the minister had finished the service, he addressed the survivors. 'We have here committed to the dust,' said he, 'a part of Christ's mystical body.' I was struck at the expression. 'A part of Christ's mystical body!' How doth he make it appear?'—He proceeded—'True believers in Jesus are declared by an apostle to be "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." And the reason is plain. In the eye of the law, considered as referring to our redemption, Jesus and his people are one. "He is (saith the same apostle) the head of his body, the church." And hence, the church is called his fair one, his love, his spouse; concerning whom he saith, "I will betroth thee unto

me for ever." And speaking of this union, Jesus declares, that "the day is coming" when all his people shall know it. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." His servant, the apostle, therefore adds, by way of confirmation concerning this oneness between Jesus and his people, that "they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery (saith Paul) but I speak concerning Christ and his church."

'Now (added the minister) from this truth it will undeniably follow, that whenever we commit to the dust the remains of a true believer in Jesus, we commit thereto a part of Christ's mystical body; for if he be the glorious head, and they his members, surely Christ, as a head, would be incomplete without his body. Death, therefore, cannot dissolve this union. Every other tie is broken by death. Even the union of our souls and bodies is, for awhile, dissolved by death. But such is the nearness and affinity, by virtue of covenant relationship, between Jesus and his people, that their oneness never can admit even of a momentary interruption. If I am a child of God by regeneration and adoption, the purchase of Christ's blood, and the subject of his grace, truly and spiritually joined to the Lord, I am as much his in death as in life. For death, though it makes a change in circumstances, makes none in relationship. And God our Father, as if to confirm to all succeeding ages of the church this glorious truth, set his seal to this testimony, when, from the bush, he declared himself to be "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." For at the time the Lord proclaimed this gracious assurance, the bodies of those patriarchs had long mouldered to their dust. But, said the Lord Jesus, in after ages, when explaining the words in reference to this very doctrine, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living;' for all live unto him.'

The minister paused—as if to let the impression have time, that its effects might be the stronger upon the minds of the hearers. For my part, I felt so much interested in what he hath said, that I longed for the prosecution of the subject. He proceeded:—'Now (said he) from this view of the subject, a question of no small importance immediately ariseth to our minds; in what light are we to consider the grave as it relates to the true believer in Jesus? Certainly it can be regarded in no other light than as a friend to our nature; for if the enmity of the grave had not been subdued by the death of Jesus, then would never the victory the Lord obtained on the cross over death, have extended to his triumph over the grave by his glorious resurrection. But by so palpable a demonstration, that the everlasting dominion both of death and the grave were destroyed in those conquests of Jesus, as our great Head, the terrors of both are done away, and henceforth the grave must be considered as among the friends of the Lord's people. "All things are your's, (saith Paul) whether life or death!" Let us (added he) for a few moments contemplate it in this point of view, and consider in how many circumstances it ministers to the faithful in this character.

'Here (as I said before) is a part of the mystical body of Jesus. Here it rests. Here it is to moulder into its original dust. Here it is to remain until the time appointed of its reunion with the soul, to which it is a part. The body, therefore, is as secure and safe as if it were already in heaven. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." No goldsmith is half so careful of the particles of his golden treasure as Jesus is of the precious dust of his body, the church. Though scattered to the four winds, or buried in the bottom of the sea, his eye beholds all. His arm upholds and preserves all; and his power, at the period

appointed, will as easily gather altogether, as at the first he called the whole into existence out of nothing.

'How beautifully Job speaks on this point, and how full to the doctrine I am adverting to, was his faith on this occasion. "There is hope of a tree (saith Job) if it be cut down that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stork thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" Now pray observe with me the force of Job's reasoning. Vegetable life is not extinct by cutting down. The moisture of the earth, the scent of water, the droppings of the rain, the influence of the sun and clouds; these have a commission to cause the fallen tree to bud, and send forth boughs like a plant. But no moisture of the earth, no stream from the river, neither sun, nor dew, nor rain, can recall life to man. His dead body lies beyond the reach of all. But where is he? Can the body which was once animated with the soul, now mingling with the spirits of just men made perfect before the throne; can it be of inferior value to the mere plants of the earth, to be useless, thrown aside and disregarded? Can the body of a believer, truly united to Jesus, be lost for ever? O no. "Thou wilt hide me (saith Job) in the grave; thou wilt keep me secret; thou wilt appoint me a set time and remember me. Then thou shalt call and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands."

'But we must not stop here (added he) in our estimate of the friendship of the grave. There is another sweet property it possesseth—the rest and freedom it affords from all the cares, and sorrows, and pains, and toils of life. Here, in the sweetest and fullest sense of

the words, " the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. Here the prisoners rest together, they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are here, and the servant is free from his master." The people of God are exposed, in common with others, to the evils of a fallen state. In this sense (as Solomon observes) " there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked." There is a difference indeed, and a mighty one it is, in the effects of those dispensations. Afflictions to the faithful are sanctified afflictions, like medicated waters, that, by running over certain mineral properties, acquire a salutary quality, while to the ungodly they retain all their natural sharpness. But still, though they ultimately prove blessings to the followers of Jesus, during their administration, they give pain. Now, in the grave, these evils of our fallen state are done away for ever. There is an everlasting end to every care, to every sorrow, to every pain. Not a pang, not an anxious thought, not a single fear shall ever again cross the breast to disturb the people of God.

' Think, if it be possible (said the clergyman) the infinite gain the body of our departed friend before us, by the late change hath found in this particular. Many of you cannot but remember, with me, what a poor, tottering, languishing frame she laboured under, before her death. Methinks I see her, as it were, before me now, and hear her well-known voice speaking, though without murmuring, of her restless nights and days of pain. But now her bodily ailments are all over, and will never afflict her again. That poor languishing head,' added he, and he looked into the grave as he said it, ' hath now found a pillow on which it may rest, and need no further moving; it will never be distracted any more, either with thinking or with acting. We shall never again see her breast heave with the bursting sigh;

and the heart, which seemed to be continually trembling and fluttering while in her sickness, will never tremble nor flutter any more. She is now rescued from all; and the eyes, which from long disease, seemed to have forgotten their office, and refused to be closed in sleep, are now fallen asleep in Jesus. Sleep on,' added he, as if speaking to the deceased, ' sleep on, dear remains! thou art gone before us to thy chamber, and Jesus both bids thee sleep, and watches over thy slumbers. " Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord."

' But,' subjoined the minister, ' these are not all the privileges of the grave to the members of Christ's mystical body. There is another blessed advantage the faithful derive from it, in that it delivers them both from the very being, and from all the remains of inbred and indwelling sin. Though Jesus, by his great salvation, hath taken out the curse, the guilt, the dominion, and the punishment of sin; yet there is an inherency of sin in the body, which, like the ivy in the wall, hath its root so folded up in the very recesses of our nature in the flesh, that until death it never ceases to send forth its deadly buddings. Paul the apostle groaned under it, and all the saints of God, like him, have felt and mourned over it to the very close of life. In the grave the root of sin falls out. By this blessed process we are for ever delivered from the remains of indwelling sin, and not the smallest budding of it can any more appear. The war in our members is over; and all the jarring affections are hushed up in an everlasting peace. Do any of you remember, concerning our dear friend before us, (said the minister) do any of you remember any little fretfulness or impatience at any time manifesting itself in her? The whole is now past. Nothing of anger will ever redden her countenance. Nothing tending to excite passion or displea-

sure will ever again be found. Her clay-cold frame is no longer susceptible of those infirmities to which we in the body are still exposed.

'If these,' continued the clergyman, 'are the blessed properties of the grave, and Jesus hath given authority to this devourer to consume only what now so much offends, and drags down my soul; come, then, thou grave! thou friend of the Lord's people! thou minister and servant of Jesus for good! freely do I deliver up my body to thee, whenever my God and Saviour shall appoint. Though thou destroyest, yet it is only as commissioned by him. Consume my flesh; for there is a vast mass of corruption in it, suited for thy power to be exercised upon. All the remains of indwelling sin in my flesh belong to thee, and I would not keep it from thee for the world. But my better part I know thou canst not touch. The day is hastening when he will come and take it, and present it to himself, "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, and then it shall be holy and without blemish." "It is now sown in corruption, but it will be raised in incorruption. It is now sown in dishonour, but it will be raised in glory. It is now sown in weakness, but it will be raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it will be raised a spiritual body." Blessed Jesus, how sweet the consolation! and how sure the events founded in thee!

'Who would have thought,' added the minister, that the grave, which in the most distant view damps all the prosperity of sinners, looks towards the believer with so smiling an aspect? And is there any other feature of loveliness in it? Yes, there is. What, think you, can be a greater mercy, than a total exemption from all the snares and temptations, and unceasing persecutions of Satan! In the grave, the poor, harassed, exercised believer, is for ever got beyond the shot of the enemy; beyond "the lions' dens, and the mountains

of leopards." And, while the *soul* is secured in the paradise of God, joining the song of the redeemed, the *body*, through which, while on earth, the tempter found constant access to afflict both, now sweetly rests in the grave. And there hell itself, with all its powers, hath no dominion. He that hath ransomed his people from sin, from death, and from the grave, hath secured them also from the powers of darkness. "He hath the keys of hell and death." '

Here the clergyman again paused. After a moment, he said, 'You will remember, I hope, that the blessings I have been speaking of, as belonging to the members of Christ's mystical body, are those which peculiarly refer to the *bodies* of departed saints. Were it needful to heighten the subject, think only what a vast accumulation of happiness must be added to what I have now said, as it relates to the *souls* of the faithful in glory.

'Strictly and properly speaking,' added the minister, the person of any man or woman is where the soul is; and this, we all know, at death, is with the Lord. Believers then join "the spirits of just men made perfect." But to speak of the felicities into which the souls of the redeemed immediately enter at the separation from the body, language is incompetent to describe it. But, that I may not be wholly silent upon the point, nor suffer you to return home without taking with you a single thought on a subject of such infinite moment; allow me to read to you that beautiful description which the Holy Ghost hath caused to be left on record, of the felicities of departed saints, given to us by his servant John, in order to raise and animate the minds of the faithful, in the contemplation of the glory that awaits them. "They have come out," says he, "of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his

temple. And he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

'Though all attempts must fail to explain the glory contained in those words of the felicity of the blessed; yet, let me remark to you, that every thing the imagination can conceive of happiness is included in them. They are said to be happy in their state; being delivered from all tribulation, and having "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." They are happy in their station; being always "before the throne of God." They are happy in their services; for they "serve God in his temple day and night." They are blessed in their society; for "he that sitteth in the midst of the throne dwelleth among them." They are blessed in a total exemption from all care; for "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more," after the empty and unsatisfying things of time and sense. They are happy in a complete deliverance from all sickness and persecution; "for the sun shall not light on them, nor any heat." They are happy in an everlasting provision of all they need; for "the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them." They are happy in all their actions; for "the Lord will lead them." And, to sum up all, their felicity shall be uninterrupted and eternal; "for God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

'Now, christian friends,' said the minister, as he followed up his address, in the close of it, 'now suffer me, before we take a farewell leave of this grave, and separate from each other, to entreat you to pause over what you have heard, and let each for himself make the application.

'My poor awakened brother, will you allow me to ask you, what provision have you made, and what state are you now in for the hour of death? Doth it not strike you with full force of conviction, that if such be the death of the believer in Jesus, how infinitely desirable must be such an end! And if it be so blessed a thing to die *in* Christ, is it not equally evident, the awfulness of dying *out* of Christ? Figure to yourself all the miseries, pains, sicknesses, heart-aches, and sorrows of nature; yet at death there is a period to the whole, as they refer to the believer. But if to a life of sorrow, the termination be a death in sin, unregenerated, unwashed, unsanctified, uninterested in Jesus, what must be the awful horrors of eternity? It matters not *where* we die, or *when* we die, or *how* we die; but, Oh! the infinite importance of dying *in Jesus!*

'Ye people of God,' added the minister, 'learn from what hath been said, to take home with you more pleasing thoughts of the grave than when you came here. And you that are the friends and relations of her, whose precious remains we leave behind, go home under the pleasing conviction, that both in body and soul she hath found an infinite gain by this event. Were she able to speak to you on the occasion, her language would be similar, and in humble imitation of the words of her adored Redeemer; "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go to the Father."

'And in respect to yourselves, and the prospect of your own departure, if you desire your dying day to be your triumphant day, do as Paul did, learn to "die daily." Love Christ, and death will be your gain. Oh! it is precious to the believer himself; it is encouraging to every beholder, to see the believer's house and heart always in order, waiting the Lord's approach; that, when his voice is heard, "Behold, I come quickly," the soul may run out to meet him, crying out, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" But what faith, what love, what

desire is that, which, when his chariot wheels are heard at the door, instead of rising up and leaping into his arms, shrinks back, and would wish him to postpone his coming!

'Dearest Jesus!' said the minister, and, as he pronounced the words, he lifted up his eyes and hands towards heaven, 'thou hast overcome death; thou hast slain the enemy of the grave; thou hast made all things what they should be to thy people; henceforth may we learn to leave every event to thy wisdom, and thy love; for sure we are, every minute circumstance is arranged concerning them, and a synod of angels could neither add to, nor take from, without injury to their present and everlasting welfare. Do thou, then, blessed Jesus, give thy people grace to wait thy sovereign will; and do thou order both the time when, the place where, and the manner how our departure is to be accomplished. Thou, thyself, we know, wilt be present; and though our dying moments be not accompanied with a splendour, yet it will be with a security like that of Stephen's; and we shall gather up all our strength, like him, and throw ourselves into thine arms, with a "Lord, Jesus, receive my spirit!" Amen.

## XXXVI.

A RECIPE FOR EVERY NEW-BORN CHILD OF GOD, TO BE USED EVERY MORNING, BY WAY OF KEEPING THE SOUL IN HEALTH, AND FROM INHALING ANY OF THE PESTILENTIAL EFFLUVIA OF SABELLIANISM, AND EVERY OTHER ISM OF HERESY. WHICH, LIKE THE THICK FOGS OF LONDON, CLOUD THE PURE ATMOSPHERE OF THE CHURCH, IN THE PRESENT AWFUL DAY OF MUCH PROFESSION, BUT LITTLE VITAL GODLINESS.

Take of the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth verses, and which are as follows:—

Verse 3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

Verse 4. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

Verse 5. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

Verse 6. "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved."

Let those verses be committed unto the memory; let them be well digested and fed upon, until, like the prophet, the child of God can say, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart," Jer. xv. 16. See also Ezek. iii. 3.

Then add the sixteenth verse of the second chapter to the Hebrews; and after that, the third verse of the first chapter of the same epistle. The words are:—

Verse 16. "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham."

Verse 3. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things

by the word of his power; when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Let these precious scriptures be well mixed with the former, and taken together with them. And let the new-born child of God feast upon them by faith, until he finds the same blessed effects as the Lord Jesus declared of his church: "Thy lips, O my spouse, (said Jesus) drop as the honey-comb; honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon," Song iv. 11.

And lastly, by way of concoction to the whole, let there be joined with the foregoing ingredients from scripture, the fourth, fifth, and sixth verses of the third chapter of St. Paul's epistle to Titus. The words are:—

Verse 4. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared."

Verse 5. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Verse 6. "Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

Now when these blessed portions of the word of God are blended together in one, and like the holy oil of the sanctuary, as scripture expresseth it (Exod. xxx. 35.) "are made a perfume, a confection, after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy;" and if graciously applied "to the fleshly tables of the heart by the Spirit of the living God," 2 Cor. iii. 3. the whole will prove a sovereign *catholicon* to the soul of every new-born child of God, to keep the soul in health, and to repel all the pestilence of heresy.

And let the new-born child of God mark, and consider well, the gracious mode by which this divine medicine operates.

The first of these blessed portions from the Ephesians, proves the person of God the Father, and his everlasting love to the church in Christ. He, and he only, as this scripture declares, "chose, adopted, and accepted" the church in Christ. And these were personal acts of God the Father, in which the Son and Spirit took no part.

The second of these blessed portions from the Hebrews doth as plainly and decidedly prove, that the "assumption of our nature" by God the Son, and the "redemption of our nature" by God the Son, were as express personal acts of the Son of God, as those before declared of the Father; and in which neither the person of the Father, nor the person of the Holy Ghost took part.

And the third of these blessed portions from the Epistle to Titus doth as clearly shew that the act of regeneration is the express personal work of God the Holy Ghost, and as truly a proof of his person and Godhead as those mentioned before of the Father and of the Son. And the whole taken together form the sweetest testimony in the heart of the new-born child of God, "that there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One," 1 John v. 7.

Let the new-born child of God, who finds grace from the Almighty Remembrancer of Christ Jesus (John xvi. 26.) have these blessed scriptures in memory:—let him morning by morning, before he goeth forth into the world, sweetly repeat them, and feast upon them in his soul; and they will not only keep him from the pestilence of the day, but fill his soul "with joy and peace in believing, abounding in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

## XXXVII.

A DIALOGUE, BETWEEN PHILIP AND ROBERT, ON THE SUBJECT OF ESTABLISHING THE GREAT WESTERN RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY.

*Philip.* I apprehend that you have formed a society, in the western district, for the dispersion of religious tracts among the poor.

*Robert.* Yes! A few pious persons, having conceived that such a scheme might be rendered useful, under the divine blessing, in order for disseminating the truths of the everlasting gospel, among the ignorant, in the hamlets and villages of the poor, have formed themselves into a society, for this purpose.

*P.* But is not such a plan rendered unnecessary, by reason of those societies, which are already established, with the same object in view, in London?

*R.* Certainly not. The scripture saith, that "two are better than one." And it is possible, that our little tracts may reach, where the others do not. While we wish all imaginable success therefore to every society formed upon the principles of sound religion and vital godliness, we venture to believe, that there is yet room for more. Besides, in some few experiments which we have already made, we find, that tracts can be printed as cheap in the country, as they are in town; and hereby we avoid the expence of carriage. So that on principles of frugality, our plan is worthy to be adopted.

*P.* I perceive by the title given to your publication, it is your intention to send abroad the tracts of your society, *gratis*, among the poor: how do you mean to accomplish this purpose?

*R.* Solely by subscription. As all the copies of any tract which may be printed, will be the property of the subscribers; and as they will be deposited in a place,

where no expence will attend the delivery of them; the subscribers may take them from the depository as they want them, in their several proportions, according to their respective right of subscription.

It is supposed, (agreeably to the present calculation) that the subscriber of a guinea per annum, will be entitled to about 25 copies of each tract printed in the course of the year. The half guinea subscriber to half the number in like manner. And for the accommodation of smaller sums, even a shilling subscriber may have in the same proportion, his number of tracts. And if any are sold in single numbers at the shop of the printer, the product will be thrown into the common fund, for printing others.

*P.* And what is to form the leading point of your several publications?

*R.* The sum and substance of all our tracts, under whatever form or shape they may be sent forth, will be founded upon that unerring rule of our blessed Lord, "the poor have the gospel preached unto them." Nothing but what hath an immediate tendency to promote the pure gospel, and such as hath the fullest and clearest sanction of the divine word in confirmation of it, will form a part of our religious tracts.

*P.* As the world is much divided in its sentiments, concerning what is gospel, and what is not, and while a large part of mankind is totally ignorant of its saving principles, and a greater mass still are totally unconcerned about it; will you do me the favour, of giving me the outlines of what the creed of your society is, on this great and momentous point?

*R.* That I shall do, with the greatest pleasure.

[The reader is desired to observe with particular earnestness of attention, what follows.]

By the gospel, we understand a plan of free, rich, full, and unmerited grace and salvation; proclaimed to a sinful, ruined, and lost world, by the sovereign mercy

of God, in and through the person and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. For the gospel considers all men, without exception, as in an undone state before God, and as impossible to effect one purpose, or even to form one purpose in the mind, towards their own recovery, as a dead body is to perform an act of animal life, or an insolvent debtor to pay his debts. And hence therefore, it is called the "gospel, or glad tidings of good things, great joy to all people." And glad tidings indeed it is, and ought to be, to all people, when it tells us this soul-rejoicing news, that there is salvation and mercy for lost and undone sinners, through the alone merits and righteousness of another, and not of our own. But it would lose its very title, and be no longer "glad tidings," or a subject of joy, to tell a poor creature, under the fullest conviction of sin, and a conscious sense of his inability, to do any thing truly meritorious in the sight of God, that if he did well he should be accepted.

The gospel therefore, as gospel, is wholly distinguished from the law; and as far as that law be considered, (as it is too often done by some, and preached by others) as a means, either wholly, or in part, as justifying the sinner before God, the gospel is in direct opposition to it. For the law knows nothing on the foot of favour. It is wholly made up of precepts, and prohibitions of promises, and threatenings. It proposeth rewards to the obedient, and holds forth terrors to the disobedient. "Do this, and thou shalt live. If thou sinnest, thou shalt die." These are the unalterable terms of the law. So that it stands in direct opposition to the whole tenor of the gospel, which is nothing but a system of grace and mercy from beginning to end. And the sum and substance of the inscription, which appears in every page of it is, "By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves,

it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast."

And indeed, the very idea of grace, implies as much. For what is grace but an act of favour, bestowed upon some object wholly undeserving of it, in the very moment of receiving it.

If I merit any thing, by doing, or suffering, either of God or man, it is not grace which gives me, in consequence thereof, my just due. I have earned it, and it would be unjust to keep it from me. But on the contrary, if I have done nothing to merit favour, nay, have done every thing to merit punishment, and yet, notwithstanding all my ill deserts, I receive mercy, kindness, and love, where if strict justice had taken place, I ought to receive condemnation, this is grace; pure, free, unmerited grace. And such is the real case respecting the "everlasting gospel of the ever blessed God."

And there is one feature more, very lovely, and infinitely endearing in the gospel, and that is what the apostle so sweetly recommends it by, when he says, that "this is a faithful saying, and worthy of *all* acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." For the gospel knows no distinction between one man and another; between what we may fancy to be very good sort of people, and the openly profane. For as *all* have sinned, and come short of God's glory, it is plain, that all are exposed alike to God's judgment. And therefore there must be an act of grace past, to pardon one sinner as well as another. The debtor of five hundred pence, or of fifty, are both insolvent, and alike unable to pay. And very plain it is, on the principles of common sense, and the experience of common life, that if the Lord forgives either, it is in him an act of free grace and favour.

This is the pure, genuine gospel of salvation, by

God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And which under the various methods, the Holy Ghost hath been pleased to make instrumental in the application of it to the heart, we mean, in our religious tracts, to recommend it to every "man's conscience in the sight of God."

*P.* But is there not some apprehension, that however well founded from scripture authority, such views of the gospel are, in holding it forth in such an open and unqualified way among the poor and uninformed, the interests of morality may be injured?

*R.* That is impossible. And that the Lord Jesus Christ thought otherwise is evident, for he commanded it to be proclaimed through all the world, and to every creature. And that the apostles of Christ thought otherwise, is as evident, for they observed the precepts of their Lord and Master, preaching "the word of salvation every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by signs and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost." And that no evil consequence ever followed the preaching fully and freely the gospel of Christ, but on the contrary the happiest effects immediately took place in the circumstances of mankind is as evident; for it tended, as well it might, to reform the morals of the world wherever it came. "It uniformly leads to whatever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, lovely, or of good report. The grace of God (saith one of the apostles) which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching them that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Do but mark well what the apostle saith. He calleth the gospel you see, the grace of God; to shew, that it is all grace, free unmerited grace in God, and not resulting from the least merit in the creature. And he saith, that this grace bringeth salvation. Now the very term salvation must imply,

that it is shewn to the lost; for otherwise it would not be salvation, and would lose its very name. But this is not all—for the sweetest effects follow. This salvation *teacheth us;* that is, not barely shews the importance and loveliness of good works, and urgeth their observance, but "the love of Christ constraineth us" to the performance of them. It is a teaching of the *heart,* as well as the *head;* for it persuades in the same moment it teacheth; and as the instruction cometh forth from an higher power than man, it induces by its sweet and persuasive influence in the mind of all its possessors to deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly in relation to ourselves, righteously towards man, and godly towards God. And these things include in their gracious effects and consequences all the great branches of moral and religious duty. And let malice if it can produce a single instance, where those blessed effects have not followed, in all cases, where the saving grace of God hath appeared. Look round your neighbourhood, and see, whether any can be found, who truly and heartily receive the doctrine of free grace, but are at the same time, "examples of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." If they are true to their own principles, this must ever be the case. Men of no real religion there may be, and men of no real religion there always will be, who profess what they do not feel, and follow a form, while destitute of vital godliness. Such by their lives and conversation prove, that they have no lot or part in the matter. But then these are not more real objections against the pure principles of the gospel themselves, than the pretenders to any art or science prove that the art or science itself is erroneous.

We contend, and on the clearest testimony prove, no less in the lives of the apostles and early followers of the free grace which is in Christ Jesus, that it is a

"doctrine after godliness." And therefore, while we recommend the gospel of the Lord Jesus, as a system of mercy to poor helpless sinners, we recommend that very plan which under grace is sure to induce a holy life and conversation. And were the gospel but more generally known, and its doctrines more generally received, and lived up to; were our people in this happy country, in the several towns and villages, better acquainted with its divine truths, and instead of being in the habit of using those profane and filthy songs, and other trash of modern publications, which hath issued from the press in such numbers of late, and been industriously circulated to the great injury of religion, and the morals of our people, if instead of these, were the saving truths of our holy faith but once diffused among them, what a blessed exchange under divine grace might not be expected to follow! And what a happy world, compared to what it now is, would it then be! The object of our society therefore is to act as an humble instrument in the hand of God for this purpose; and we are led to hope, under the divine blessing, the happiest consequences will follow.

*P.* Well, Sir! I can only say it hath my heartiest wishes that it may answer those blessed purposes.

*R.* Then I shall hope also, if it hath the wishes of your heart, it will receive also the exertions of your helping hand. That is, I mean if your circumstances can afford it, with convenience to yourself, that you will purchase and distribute tracts among those who cannot. And if this be out of your power, yet still at least that you will promote the subscriptions among those that can. For no man is so poorly circumstanced as to be out of the reach of one or the other of these departments. Every man, however low or humble, hath his little circle of acquaintance, where his influence, or example, or advice, or entreaty, will operate. And fancy if you can any charity equal to the charity

which is directed to the soul of a fellow creature. If I give an alm to a poor man, to preserve him from starving, the act is noble and the charity great. But the preservation of a thousand, or of ten thousand from starving, is but mercy to the body, and which whether relieved or not, must soon cease to be of consequence. But mercy to the soul of a poor fellow sinner is of everlasting moment; for in its consequences it includes an eternity of existence. And if you can be instrumental in the Lord's hand to point such a sinner to salvation, which is in and through the blood and righteousness of Christ, this tends to make the man happy for ever. And as there is no kind of charity that carries with it the least proportion in point of value to that charity which is directed to the immortal interests of mankind, so in God's word the greatest promises are annexed to the performance of it. "Let him know (saith an inspired writer) that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." And another scripture saith, "they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." And when you consider how easily and cheaply this is performed, it seems to appeal to the common feelings of mankind. Fancy only that you were to take with you a few of those pious tracts into some of the many dark villages or skirts of towns, where ignorance and its consequent vices abound; suppose you were to put into the hand of some poor thoughtless profligate creature you met, one only of those little pamphlets, which speak of those alarming truths, that "the wages of sin is, and must be death;" that "a day is coming, when every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof before the judgment seat of God;" and that in that day "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God;" do you not think that these solemn

declarations, if followed by divine grace, would have the happiest effects to awaken a sinner to a sense of his danger, and prompt him "to flee from the wrath to come?" And can a charity be accomplished of an higher nature, or in a way more easy or less expensive, than by the circulation of little tracts of this kind? Or suppose again, in one of those errands of mercy, you were to discover a poor distressed and soul burthened sinner, who had a lively sense of the corruptions of his nature, but wanted that instruction and consolation of relief, which alone can be found in the rich salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ; can the imagination furnish a picture of any thing more godlike, or noble, than that of holding up to his view what the gospel proclaims to despairing sinners of pardon, mercy, and peace, through the grace which is in Christ Jesus; "that Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance: and all that come to him he will in no wise cast out?" And to mention no more, what a field of the richest charity is opened, before every man of tender and compassionate feelings, when he considers what the gospel affords in its balm of comfort, and under its various applications to the sickness, sorrows, darkness, and the ten thousand instances of misery, which beset the path of life, and which are the sad consequences of sin, and the natural effects of our present fallen state? There is no cure, that is, no *real* cure, for those sorrows of the heart but what the true religion of the Lord Jesus affords; but in the blessed volume of the gospel the remedy is made known to us in speaking peace to the troubled mind by speaking pardon to our sins. And as these objects more or less will be the chief, and indeed the only pursuit of our tract society, in teaching the exercised soul how to extract good from evil, and to improve temporal chastisement into matter of eternal advantage, think only, what satisfaction of the heart that is which must arise

in every man's mind in the reflection that he hath been a kind of ministering angel upon earth, in the distribution of such little works of mercy as have an immediate tendency to the accomplishment of such beneficent purposes.

Let me beg of you, then, to take with you those interesting considerations, on the subject of our society, and while you cannot but approve the measure, let it have the favour of your countenance and support. And above all, give it your fervent prayers, that that almighty power, whose "strength is perfected in human weakness," and who worketh by the feeblest and poorest instruments, "according to the counsel of his own will," may graciously bless those humble efforts to his glory, and the sinner's welfare, in "turning many souls from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan unto God." Amen.

## XXXVIII.

BIBLE NUTS, MADE EASY FOR THE TOOTH BOTH OF YOUNG AND GROWN CHILDREN.

Who will buy my nuts? (a poor woman cried, as she passed through the market-place, to sell the penny tracts of the great western society) who'll buy, who'll buy?—Here! answered an honest farmer, (who happened to be standing on the other side of the street) here good woman, bring them over to me. The poor woman crossed the street and held up her little basket of books.—I see no nuts (the farmer said) here are nothing but books. Yes! (answered she) these are bible nuts; which when cracked and opened, will be found to afford very sweet and precious food to the taste of those who like them, as well for old persons as for young. And those nuts, Sir, (added she) never hurt the teeth. The farmer who had a relish for divine truths, seemed pleased with the novelty of the thing itself, and having children whom he had been endeavouring to "bring up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," he determined to take them home with him. He therefore purchased, with a penny, the little book which contained them; and after his return in the evening, having finished what he had to do, called his children together, and having told them what he had bought, began to read as follows:—

BIBLE NUTS.

"There was a little city, and few men within it. And there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it, a poor wise man; and he by his wisdom delivered the city: yet no man remembered that same poor man," Eccles. ix. 14, 15.

That's very pretty, (cried one of the farmer's children) I wish I knew more about it.—Listen, child,

(answered the father) here is more, in what follows. If I mistake not, (added he) the nut is here opened, and the substance of it given.

Perhaps, (says the author) the city here spoken of, is the world. And if so, it may not improperly be called *little;* for in comparison to the creation of God, it is little indeed. For scripture tells us, "that all the nations of the earth are but as the drop of the bucket, and are counted but as the small dust of the balance. The Lord (it is said) taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And the inhabitants of the earth are but as grasshoppers before him."

But if we suppose the city to mean the city of the living God, that is, his church, which he hath formed out of the world, then it will be still reduced in comparison, and be yet smaller. Little and inconsiderable is its size, and few are its inhabitants. "While without" (as an apostle speaks) that is, in the world at large, "are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and idolaters, and murderers, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie," Rev. xxii. 15.

I never heard any thing to please me better (said another of the farmer's children, who was somewhat elder than the former). Pray go on, my dear father, let us hear more. The farmer continued—

"And there came a great king against it, and besieged it." The father looked at his little family, and said, can any of you tell, who is meant by this great king? The children were all silent—I think (said the father) it must be the great enemy of mankind.—But let us hear what saith the book:—he read on. Perhaps this great king (said the author) is Satan: for he is indeed a great king, and "a prince of the power of the air; the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." He hath been besieging this little city, from the first of its being formed, and by its lying flat-

teries, and deceitful falsehoods, never ceasing to attempt its total overthrow.

Perhaps, (says the author) it may be sin; which is here represented by a great king: for great is the dominion of sin; it is universal in its influence, and (as an apostle speaks) reigneth over our mortal bodies.

Perhaps, (says the author) it may mean death, besieging the little city; for millions have been compelled to bow to the sceptre of his power. And "death (as the same apostle describes) reigned from Adam to Moses." And still from that time to the present hour hath continued his sway, and will continue until time shall be no more, and "death be swallowed up in victory."

Perhaps, (says the author) it may be all of them together; Satan, sin, and death; for their empire is the same; and they all began, and will end, their dominion together. For as when Satan tempted our first parents in the paradise of God, "sin entered into the world, and death by sin:" so he that hath vanquished all, "through death hath destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil;" and having raised the siege, "hath delivered them who through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage."

I long to hear (said one of the children) somewhat of the poor wise man who is said by his wisdom to have delivered the city. What a state must a city be in, against which such an host of foes contend!

"Now there was found (saith the bible) in the city a poor wise man. And he by his wisdom delivered the city."

Here are many sweet things (says the author) to be noticed in this account; for every word is important.

He is said to have been a poor man. And who more poor than the Lord Jesus Christ? He was poor in every sense of the word; for when he came upon

earth, "he had not where to lay his head." He was poor in his humiliation, for "being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." And hence an apostle says, "you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

But though poor, he is said to be wise. And considered in the Godhead of his nature, wise indeed he was, and is, and ever will be: for he is wisdom itself. He calls himself by that glorious name, and which it is plain can belong to no other but to God himself, therefore he is God. And yet, though wise, he was a wise man; for literally and truly, he was man as well as God: and both God and man in one and the same person. Precious Saviour! how endeared art thou to all that know thy name, "who put their trust in thee."

But it is said that this poor wise man, was found in the city. How was he found there? Sweetly it may be said so. For he was found of God the Father. "I have found a ransom," (saith God) Job xxxiii. 24. "I have found David (that is Christ) my servant," Psalm lxxxix. 19. And he is said to have been found in the city, among the few men his companions; because God the Father is said, when laying help upon one that is mighty, to have chosen him "out of the people." Psalm lxxxix 20. And respecting his being found in the city by his people, here, also, he may truly be said to be found; and "found of them that seek him not." Isa. lxv. 1.

The father and his children were all equally delighted with the subject, and the father continued to read.

"And he by his wisdom delivered the city." The

wisdom of God is eminently displayed in the deliverance of his people. For nothing short of infinite wisdom could have devised the plan of redemption: and nothing less than infinite wisdom could have executed it. The same wisdom which became necessary for the formation of the world, became necessary to the redemption of the world. And as Jesus is wisdom itself, so every purpose needful for the delivery of his city, his church and people is founded in wisdom to the accomplishment. Hence, when the "seed of the woman" was made to "bruize the serpent's head," in that hour deliverance was found from sin, death, and hell; all enemies were subdued, and the besieged set free.

One part, and that a very painful part, remains yet to be noticed in this sweet scripture. For the history adds, "yet no man remembered that same poor man." Shameful ingratitude! and still more shameful from its being universally so. For had the history said, that this mighty deliverer was forgotten of one, or of some few, or even of many, while others blessed his memory, it would have been somewhat; but when it is said of all, for no man remembered him! what an awful character doth it afford of human nature!

We have reason to blush, my dear children, (said the father, as he closed his observations on this scripture) that this baseness and ingratitude belongs as much to you and me by nature, as well as to all others. What was said of Israel of old, may with equal truth be said of Israel now: "they forgat God their Saviour who had done so great things in Egypt," Psalm cvi. 21.

## ANOTHER.

"The poor is hated even of his own neighbour; but the rich hath many friends," Prov. xiv. 20.

I can easily conceive, (said the father to his children as he read this proverb) I can easily conceive, that the

rich hath many friends; for his riches will if generously used, beget them. But I do not so plainly discover the cause, why poverty should call forth hatred! But what saith our author?

He that is poor in spirit, (saith the author) will be persecuted for righteousness sake. His very profession, as a follower of Christ, must subject him to this; and as the Redeemer himself declared, and more or less all his disciples have found, that "if any man will come after him, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow him."

But though envied and reproached by his neighbour, for his poverty of spirit, yet being "rich in faith," and an "heir of the kingdom," he hath "many friends."

All the persons of the Godhead are his friends. God the Father is his friend; for so Solomon observes in another proverb: "he that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the King shall be his friend," Prov. xxii. 4.

God the Son is his friend; for he saith himself to his disciples, "I have called you friends," John xv. 15. And hence the church, on this authority, saith of him, "this is my beloved, and this is my friend," Cant. v. 16. And this is he, that is elsewhere spoken of, as "one born for adversity, and a friend that sticketh closer than a brother," Prov. xviii. 24. My soul! I charge it upon thee, concerning this dear "friend of sinners," that thou remember Solomon's words, when he saith, "thine own friend and thy father's friend forget not," Prov. xxvii. 10. But take up the resolution of Moses, and say as he did; "he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation: my father's God, and I will exalt him," Exod. xv. 2.

God the Holy Ghost is the friend also of the rich in faith; for it is he who sympathizes with them in all their trials and afflictions, and becomes their Almighty Comforter through time unto all eternity.

The innumerable company of angels are the friends of the rich in faith; and so are the spirits of just men made perfect. The general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and the whole of the church militant here upon earth, are all friends to the rich in faith. So that it may be truly said, and without the danger of going beyond the mark, that however they that will live godly in Christ Jesus, suffer persecution, and are the poor which are hated of their neighbours; yet are they highly esteemed and have many friends.

The farmer and his children were well pleased with this bible nut also thus opened to their view, and the father proceeded to

ANOTHER.

"For it is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them; and he that formed them will shew them no favour," Isa. xxvii. 11.

The father paused.—After some little meditation he said, this is a very awful passage. I know not what to think of it. But what saith our author?

Who are the persons meant in this scripture, as "a people of no understanding?" It cannot be such as are weak in intellect; for this they had not the power to help. It is not idiots neither, and such as are born without reason; for, for these things they surely are not responsible. Neither can we suppose, by the expression of "having no understanding," the sacred writer intended to refer to the state of little children, whose tender capacities are not competent to know things.—Who are they, then?

I apprehend (says the author) that if we construe this sentence by another, and which in all difficult passages seems to be the most infallible method, for scripture is the best interpreter of scripture, the sense of it will be easily obtained. In the book of Job, chap. xxviii.

and 28th verse, we thus read. "And unto man, he said, behold the fear of the Lord that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." Hence, therefore, Job explains what Isaiah declared. And the people of no understanding are those in whose heart the fear of God is not, and consequently who have not the understanding to depart from evil. And it is to such characters the awful sentence of this scripture belongs.

ANOTHER.

"But there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared," Psalm cxxx. 4.

This is a very extraordinary argument, (said the father) and just the reverse of what we naturally should suppose would be the case. I cannot see the grounds upon which it proceeds. That there is forgiveness, or propitiation with God, by virtue of the Redeemer's righteousness and death, becomes, no doubt, the highest and best of all possible reasons for a poor sinner to "hope in divine mercy." But how can this be said to be the motive for fear? But let us hear what saith our author.

The fear here spoken of (says the author) is that sweet child-like fear, which because it loves it fears to give offence. It is as if the soul said, 'I have found forgiveness from my God and Father, and shall I dare again to offend? I was once an alien and far off from God, and "an enemy to him by wicked works;" whereas, "now I am brought nigh by the blood of Christ." There is forgiveness with thee, and therefore I fear to offend thee.' How different is this religious affectionate fear of God's adopted children, from the despairing fear and terror of the ungodly. The faithful fear, because there is mercy with God. Devils fear and tremble, because they know that there is no mercy with God for them.

The farmer was pleased with the distinction, and confessed its justice; and desired his children not to lose sight of it, in their view of the divine favour.

ANOTHER.

"Behold the stone I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes," Zech. iii. 9.

That's a difficult nut to crack, I fancy, father, said one of his children, (who by this time began to see somewhat into the sense implied in the title of Bible Nuts) can you break it?—The father said I am at a loss how to do it, I confess. I know that the Lord Jesus Christ is more than once said in scripture to be a tried corner stone laid in Zion. The prophet Isaiah had it in command from God the Holy Ghost to declare, that God the Father would lay him as a sure foundation, Isa. xxviii. 16. And that no possible mistake might arise to whom it referred, the apostle Peter had it in commission to reveal, that it was Christ, 1 Peter ii. 6, 7. But who those seven eyes are, which are said to be upon him, I know not. Let us however hear the opinion of our author.

I am led to conclude (saith the author) that the seven eyes spoken of by the prophet, to be fixed upon the person of the Lord Jesus, are as follows: 1st. God the Father. For it is said, that "in him he is well pleased." And therefore, may we not suppose, the eyes of God the Father are fixed on him with ineffable delight? The glories of his person, the greatness of his undertaking in redemption-work for his people, his spotless righteousness, his immaculate death, his triumphant resurrection, his return to glory, and the perpetual operation of his unchangeable priesthood; must not the eyes of God the Father be everlastingly placed on him who is the brightness of his own glory and the express image of his person?

2nd. The eyes of God the Holy Ghost, with equal

rapture and complacency, must eternally behold him, who is unremittingly employed in taking of his fulness to shew unto his people.

3rd. Angels perpetually are looking on him who is the almighty object of their adoration and their praise. It is their office to wait his high commands when sent forth by him to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation.

4th. Old testament saints, before his incarnation, "who saw his day afar off, rejoiced, and were glad." And new testament believers, since his tabernacling in flesh, whose eyes like them are equally fixed on the Lord Jesus, "for pardon, mercy, and peace unto eternal life."

5th. All creation of rational and intelligent beings, who are looking for his second coming in the clouds to judgment: for "behold every eye shall see him; and they also that pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."

6th. Devils also and condemned spirits must see him too, when "he shall speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." And lastly,

7th. Those unhappy, wretched, and utterly undone souls, who in this day of grace cannot be prevailed upon that he should reign over them, must, in the day of his vengeance, behold him in his anger, "when he shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and have not obeyed the gospel of Jesus."

Oh! my soul, seek grace from the Holy Spirit to behold him now in his beauty, who is the only hope of thy salvation, that thou mayest for ever gaze on the loveliness of his person, and admire and adore him to all eternity. Dearest and ever blessed Jesus, may it be my lot to have my longing eyes fixed eternally on thee. May I so look as to be enlightened, and so gaze as to be transformed; "and from beholding, as in a

glass, the glory of the Lord, may I be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

The children were particularly struck and pleased with this bible nut, and eagerly desired more. The father proceeded to read

ANOTHER.

"And he spake also a parable unto them. No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old: if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old," Luke v. 36.

This cannot be taken in the exact words as they stand in our bibles, (said the father) for poor John, our neighbour, you know, hath many a new piece of cloth put upon his old clothes. Oh, yes! (said the farmer's little boy) and don't you remember, father, the beggar at the door yesterday, what patches his coat had?

Let us hear once more our author, said the father. These words, our dear Redeemer tells us, (saith the author) are in a parable. Hence, therefore, the meaning must be somewhat moral or spiritual. And this verse is truly so. The old garment here spoken of, I should suppose, is the old unrenewed nature of man. And this cannot be patched up, or piecened, for it would make but the rent worse, in tempting the wearer to fancy himself something when he was nothing. And to take the robe of Jesus to mend up the tattered rags of our supposed righteousness, would be presumptuous indeed. His robe was without seam. A beautiful emblem of the complete righteousness of his person. And it must be the whole covering of the Redeemer which the sinner wears compleat, if ever he hopes to see the face of God in glory. Dearest Lord! do thou clothe me with thy robe of righteousness, and cover me with the garment of thy salvation; then shall I greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul be joyful in my God.

Go on, dear father, (said one of his children) open some more. There are no more, said the father. The author only adds, that if from the sample he hath here given, the purchasers should find pleasure, they may (through the divine teachings) be enabled to open a great variety of bible nuts for themselves, with which the sacred word abounds, and from hence be continually gathering subject matter for the improvement of the mind, in that wisdom "which maketh wise unto salvation." And if parents and masters of families, and whosoever hath the government and care of children, would but devote an half hour of an evening amidst their little household to an employment of this nature, they would not only find a reward in the pleasure of the service, but would be taking the most effectual means under God's grace to promote the spiritual and eternal welfare of the rising generation, in providing an antidote against the poison of infidelity, which is more and more mingling itself among the fashionable system of education in the present day. And it need not be added, that in so doing they will be subserving the interests of true religion, bringing glory to God, advancing the real happiness of man, and giving cause to a generation to bless their memory, when they are gathered to their fathers and have seen corruption.

Well (said the father) I thank the author for his recommendation. And my dear children, we will from this time devote some portion of every evening for this purpose. And I doubt not but a gracious God will mercifully condescend "to give us a right understanding in all things," while we make it a subject of prayer unto him, to "open our eyes that we may see the wondrous things of his law."

## XXXIX.

### THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD GIVEN TO BE KNOWN ONLY TO THE CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM.

"And he said unto them, unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables," Mark iv. 11.

It is too plain a truth to need any thing more in confirmation than the simple statement; namely, that nothing can arise above its source. The natural apprehension can never receive what is supernatural. The child in nature unborn can perform no one act of animal life. Neither can the sinner, while remaining dead in trespasses and sins, conceive a thought, much less put forth an exertion, to the attainment of what is spiritual. And hence the decisive and unalterable doctrine of our most glorious Christ, the new birth, must precede an entrance into his kingdom," John iii. 3—5.

The mystery of a kingdom of God is a spiritual subject, impossible to be understood by any but such as are spiritually taught. When by regeneration the child of God is rendered capable of discerning divine truths, and matriculated into the school of Christ, then, and not before, he is brought under the pupilage of the Holy Ghost; and then all those sublime principles of our most holy faith begin to open upon the renewed mind, and are enlarged more and more under their several bearings to the spiritual apprehension of the Lord's people; "not indeed in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." But it is immediately added in the same scripture, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii.

13, 14. Observe the sacred scripture doth not say that the natural man will not receive them, but that he cannot. All the powers of reason and argument, are incompetent to impress divine truths upon the carnal understanding!

This statement is set forth in a great variety of places in the word of God; but in none with greater emphasis of language than by the Son of God himself, in the words before you from the evangelist. Drawing the same line of everlasting distinction which uniformly from the beginning of the time-state of the church through all ages, hath marked "him that serveth God from him that serveth him not;" the Lord hath here not only stated the vast difference, but traced it to its cause. Speaking to his disciples to whom grace had been shewn, for the apprehension of divine things, Jesus said, "unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables!" What those mysteries are in relation to the sublime doctrines of the gospel, concerning the church of our most glorious Christ, I shall briefly glance at as I prosecute the subject. And then endeavour to shew the special and personal privileges of the Lord's people to whom it is given to know them. But previously I would beg, that the doctrine itself may call forth a pause, by way of pondering its vast and momentous consequence.

There is not a sentence in the bible, when duly considered, more strikingly calculated to arrest attention. It is here most graciously said by our most glorious Christ, that it is "given to them, (that is, his people) to know the mystery of the kingdom."

Neither merit, nor demerit, deservings, nor undeservings, are taken into the account. As is the free, sovereign will, and pleasure of God. On the reverse side of the subject it is said, "but unto them that are

without, all these things are done in parables!" To them that are without! Not included in the election of grace! And these two distinct classes of men, divide the whole world. Let a congregation, however numerously assembled, be ascertained by this standard, and ultimately it must be brought to this decision, namely, the regenerate, to whom it is given "to know the mystery of the kingdom:" and the unregenerate, who in the solemn language of this text, are called "them that are without!" And at the close of every ordinance, in the ministry of the word, if the question were put as by the prophet, "who hath believed our report; and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Isa. liii. 1. The answer concerning the former would be, they, "to whom it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom." And concerning the latter, the prophet's language would be like him of old; "then said I, ah! Lord God! they say of me, doth he not speak parables?" Ezek. xx. 49.

If I detain you a little longer in a way of preface to the subject, before that I enter upon the subject itself, it shall only be to bring before you a further confirmation of this most solemn, but most unquestionable truth, of the effect that invariably follows preaching; and which the Son of God hath stated, when he himself was the preacher, "who spake as never man spake." When Jesus had finished his sayings, in the audience of the people, in his divine sermon on the mount, the Lord closed up his discourse in similar terms to those which have been noticed. "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon

the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it," Matt. vii. 24—27. In the character of those, our Lord here describes as hearing his sayings, and doing them, we have the portraits of the men in the regeneration, "unto whom it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God." By regeneration, or the new birth, they are called forth to the exercise of the spiritual faculties the Lord hath given them. Hence they are spiritually alive to divine things. Their eyes are enlightened to see "the hope of their calling." They hear and "know the joyful sound." They "walk in the light of God's countenance." Every spiritual faculty is awakened and engaged. And as all the persons in the Godhead have co-operated in giving the highly favoured objects of divine love to know "the mystery of the kingdom;" they are enabled from the same divine gift to build all their hopes of everlasting happiness upon the rock Christ Jesus, as the visible Jehovah in all the purposes, counsel, will, and pleasure of God in the person of Jesus Christ. So that when, according to the figurative language here used, of rains, and floods, and winds descending, the rains of sin and corruption, the torrents of temptations, and the winds of persecution all pour in upon the soul, yet founded on Christ Jesus, the child of God stands firm and unshaken, and weathers out every storm. According to another beautiful similitude, the Lord himself being their security, he is "the hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," Isa. xxxii. 2. Here the figure is extended further. For Christ is not only an impregnable fortress and security where his people are garrisoned by his divine presence, and where he himself receives all the battering rams and weapons of artillery fired against

them ; but he supplies them within, as he defends them without ; and not only becomes their shelter from the storm, but their sustenance from all famine. According to that sweet promise, "he shall dwell on high ; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks : bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure," Isa. xxx. 16. But now behold the contrast. He that builds his house on the sand, namely, on himself, and his own fancied attainments in nature, is, (to use the language of this scripture) "among them that are without." Unregenerate, unrenewed, untaught of God, all the mysteries of the kingdom are a parable to him. And when the time of trial comes, when, like the storm of wind and rain beating upon an house, his day of account arrives, and he is called upon to enter eternity, he embarks on rotten planks, in a boat of his own building, with which none taught of God would even venture to cross a ferry. He hath nothing but a rope of sand for his cable, while the floods of justice are beating ; like so many cataracts upon him, and the whirlwind of divine vengeance is sweeping him away ! Well might the Lord say in that solemn scripture, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear ?" 1 Peter iv. 18.

But it is time to make some inquiry concerning "the mystery of the kingdom, which is given to be known to the children of the kingdom. Given them to be *known*. That is, given to them a spiritual apprehension of their divine grace and operations for enjoyment. Not given them to explain, but to believe ; not to call forth their curiosity to search after what is unfathomable ; but to receive all their blissful manifestations for their everlasting welfare in their hearts. This is expressed in Christ's own words, when he saith, "unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him ; and he willl shew them his covenant," Psalm xxv. 14.

They shall know the everlasting love of the Holy Three in One which bear record in heaven by the grace which is shewn them from each, personally, in and to their own souls. They shall know the love of God the Father, in choosing, adopting, and accepting them in Christ. They shall know the love of God the Son, in betrothing them to himself before all worlds, and redeeming them during the time-state of the church while on earth, from the Adam-fall transgression. And they shall know the love of God the Holy Ghost in the original and eternal anointing of them in Christ, when they were first chosen in Christ; and regenerating them from the ruins of the fall when they were "dead in trespasses and sins." Here is the true spiritual knowledge which our adorable Lord saith concerning the mystery of the kingdom is given the children of the kingdom to know; and which, as it is the basis of all spiritual knowledge, for the present life of faith, so is it comprehensive of all that will form the happiness of the people of God in a life to come.

And I take occasion herefrom to observe, the very great blessedness of this knowledge as the foundation for every other, of a spiritual and eternal nature, in that it brings the regenerated child of God into a personal knowledge of and communion with all the persons in the Godhead. For while each and every divine act of grace from the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost bears the fullest testimonies of the infinite power of each, and thereby demonstrates the unity of the divine essence, it no less defines the distinct and personal acts of each, so as to prove the plurality of persons in the Godhead. For example. If I am regenerated and born again, I hereby prove the personal act of God the Holy Ghost to my person as I am in Christ, in his washing of regeneration in Christ Jesus. And this regeneration is not to make me a child of God, but to demonstrate that I am one, and that from

everlasting, Gal. iv. 6. And this regeneration is not my redemption, for that hath been, and is, the sole and incommunicable work of my most glorious Christ. But by regeneration, I am brought into a new and spiritual life to enjoy it. And hence, by it thus being "given to me to know the mystery of the kingdom," I am brought into a saving knowledge of the love of God the Father, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost. I stay not to enlarge upon the other mysterious truths connected with what I have mentioned. The unity of the divine essence in his Trinity of persons, is the first and leading one of every other. And the regenerated child of God to whom is given to know this mystery of the kingdom in the personal, practical, and experimental manner in his own soul, which on scripture testimony I have here just glanced at, as I proposed, will not be a stranger to all that is connected with it in the faith of God's elect.

I said when I had briefly adverted to "the mystery of the kingdom," I would endeavour to shew the special and personal privileges of the Lord's people, to whom "it is given to know them." And these are so plain, and clear, and palpable, that the highly favoured objects of such distinguishing grace who enjoy such mercy, can need no more than the contemplation of their contrasted circumstances to others, even as the solemn word of our Lord expresseth it, "them that are without," to feel impressions of divine goodness. Nay, the recollection of their own former state will shew them, when in the days of their unregeneracy, they were living, as others do, in the vanity of their mind; "without God, and without Christ in the world!" What an awakening scripture is that of the Holy Ghost by Paul to the church! Eph. ii. 1. to the end. But the limits allotted me will not admit of my enlarging further.

And what is, or ought to be, the result, from this view of the subject? Who among you is enabled to accept the gracious declaration of our most glorious Christ; and from a well-grounded hope in the assurance of being regenerated, can and doth make application of the words of Christ, as addressed to himself, when Jesus saith, "unto you is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God?" Oh! how impossible is it to conceive the incalculable greatness of the mercy! And who, under the consciousness of being a partaker of it, but must feel constrained to cry out with the apostle, and say as he did, "thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!" 2 Cor. ix. 15.

And let not the redeemed and regenerated child of God overlook, or for a moment forget, the unspeakableness of the blessing, in that it is altogether a gift, free, unmerited, unlooked for, unthought of; yea, not only without any deservings, but against all deservings. How fully comes home to the soul of the regenerated child of God, upon a thousand occasions in life, that sweet scripture, "for who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" 1 Cor. iv. 7.

And let not the little ones among the children of the kingdom, at any time call in question their sonship and adoption, in the family of grace, on account of their slender knowledge, or little attainments as they conceive "in the mysteries of the kingdom." Have they felt, and do they feel the plague of their own heart? Have they soul-satisfying views of the infinite dignity of Christ's person, and the infinite fulness and suitability of Christ's finished salvation? These things are not learnt in nature's school, neither can any unawakened, unregenerate sinner ever know them. What our attainments are, is nothing. What Christ is, becomes the whole. All the children of a family among men, are not of equal stature, equal ability, equal age.

Neither among the children of the kingdom do all possess equal apprehensions, equal feelings, equal enjoyments. But all the household of the former, if children, are of the same stock and lineage. And all of the latter, are alike quickened into the same spiritual life; have one and the same union, one and the same interest. Eph. iv. 7—13.

The God of all grace bless with his savour these words to those unto whom he hath "given to know the mystery of the kingdom;" and make that knowledge introductory to all spiritual understanding; "that ye may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God," Coloss. i. 9, 10.

## XL.

### A FRAGMENT ON THE OPERATIONS OF PREVENTING AND RESTRAINING GRACE.

We lose many a sweet and soul-refreshing enjoyment from the vacancy of our inattentive minds, to the numberless divine things which are continually passing and repassing before us. The spiritual church of Christ (for it is of such only I now speak) who by regeneration and the new life are brought into communion and fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, are supposed to be always on the watch-tower, like the prophet, for those love-tokens of the Lord, by which he manifesteth himself to his people "otherwise than he doth unto the world." In the first ages of mankind, the patriarchs were alive unto these employments. Holy men of old among the Enochs and Abrahams of their day and generation, thus "walked with God." They had communion with God in his providences. They realized and substantiated things which were remote as if present. By faith they endured things as "seeing him that is visible;" and through the lively exercise of this sovereign gift of God, they did then, as we do by glasses now, bring home objects which were distant to immediate view, and in the well-grounded confidence of trust and hope in God, took up present possession of a reversionary right. They gave God the credit of God; and believed that what God "had promised he was able to perform; and therefore it was imputed to them for righteousness!"

And it is a sad impeachment of the spiritual church of Christ, when the faith of those primitive saints of God was so brilliant, if ours is dim and obscure "upon whom the ends of the world are come." For they

possessed not half our advantages. They looked at the promise, and embraced it at a time when many an hundred years were to run out before he to whom it referred, and in whom it was to be completed, was to come. Whereas we have seen his glorious advent, and beheld his own arm "which brought salvation." And having returned to the right hand of the Majesty on high, "angels, principalities, and powers, being made subject unto him;" he hath left behind him all those exceeding great and precious promises, which assure us of his unceasing and everlasting presence, guiding us in all the circumstances of life; making all things minister to our good, "watering us every moment, and lest any hurt us, keeping us night and day." So that there is not, there cannot be, a single event in all the providences of our God, but what, had we the grace to watch his footsteps, in them we might discover his divine leadings from the greatest to the least, in deliverance from the apparently most alarming dispensations to the most minute, in numbering of the hairs of our head.

I take shame while I say these things, in the recollection, that with this conviction on my mind, what a multitude of occurrences, laden, as I am sure they are, with blissful contents, and suffered to pass by like the stream which glideth away, no more to return, unheeded, unregarded, and unimproved! I hope better things of others, while constrained to this confession of myself. Nevertheless in those instances where through grace I have been led to watch the Lord in his ways and works, to myself or others, who is unceasingly watching his people through all, I have found at times such blessedness, as hath verified the seeming paradox of the man of old; when, "out of the eater came forth meat; and out of the strong came forth sweetness," Judges xiv. 14. I shall not offend the reader I assure myself, if I give in before him a short statement how

these watchings of the Lord in his divine government both in relation to ourselves and others, may not unfrequently be rendered profitable. If the Lord's blessing accompany it, improvement will follow. It will be but a fragment, though volumes might be gathered more or less from every spiritual man's life in the discovery of the divine operations in preventing and restraining grace.

I begin with observing, how very much may be gathered on this subject for the soul's spiritual improvement in the solemn contemplation of those events which take place, in the circumstances of others; and with which, in the first blush of things it might be supposed that we had no concern; but which sometimes interest above every other, and, under divine teaching, produced a full-heaped measure of the richest consolation. These are indeed observed and enjoyed, within the sacred inclosure of a man's own portion by the spiritual mind; and are among those inexpressible feelings which Solomon speaks of; when he saith, "the heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy," Prov. xiv. 10. Under these impressions, it may be, that I shall be thought singular; but be it so: I do not blush to say, that there is scarcely an awful transaction of the death of the malefactors at Newgate, frequent as they are, but what I am in spirit present at. Remote as I am in body from this awful scene of action, having from the public prints received the sad tidings of the day; with the first of the morning when arisen, my contemplation takes wing, and I alight in imagination at the well-known spot; behold in idea the painful process; mark the distracted features of the condemned as they approached the place of execution; behold the assembled multitude; witness the close of the death; view their bodies removed; the drop removed also, and the concourse of spectators gone.—The mind can hardly figure

to itself the wonderful change of scene that instantly takes place, from sometimes incalculable numbers during the trembling administration of justice ; and the few that are seen in the same spot when it is over. Is this the place (I say to myself) where in sad succession so many who have forfeited their lives to the laws of their country, make their entrance into the eternal world? Do the looking on seriously lay it at heart? Do any pause as they pass this Golgotha, and ponder the event which hath followed the delinquents when passing from one judgment to another? Is it possible that they who are now going by and walking over the ground, where a short hour since those fellow creatures were beheld in agonies inexpressible, and seem as insensible as though nothing had happened?

But I would hope, (nay, I am confident) that the contemplation must be beheld through a different medium by every regenerate and spiritually taught child of God. Very blessedly the Lord speaks by his servant the prophet on subjects of so solemn a nature, when he saith, "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it," Micah vi. 9. From this statement it appears, that "the Lord's voice" crieth unto the city. And can it be supposed at a time when events so tremendously awful are transacting, that the cry is not then made? Moreover, the rod of God is not only to be *felt* but *heard!* By whom? "The man of wisdom:" namely, the spiritually taught of God. The insensible crowd who hurried to the sight, and when over, hastened back again ; neither hear the Lord's voice, or the rod, or who hath appointed it. Not so the regenerate. Perhaps, (I have said to myself, as I ruminated the horrid spectacle) some of these unhappy beings had not attained to an age like mine in any proportion! Possibly, though suffering the sentence of the law for the particular crime

of which they were convicted, in the aggregate of sin, my more lengthened life may have exceeded theirs in many things of moral turpitude. And if we are not all brought to the same level by actual transgression, sure I am, there can be no difference in original sin! I feel at this moment, as I have often felt them, when in imagination before the platform at the execution, the idea entered my mind. Humbling as it becomes, yet is it highly profitable. And to what cause then is ascribable my deliverance, both from the perpetration of the crime, and the consequent punishment? Are not both the sole result of discriminating mercy? Convinced as I most unalterably am, that the hand which now writes, hath the same capability to evil as any other of the same nature; to what, or to whom, must be justly referred, that upholding power by which I am preserved, while others fall? How striking is the language of Christ on subjects of this solemn nature! "Suppose ye, that these were sinners above all men that dwelt at Jerusalem, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish!" Luke xiii. 1—4. Doth the reader enter into a spiritual apprehension of the subject? Then will he learn from the same divine teaching, the blessedness of watching the divine operations of preventing and restraining grace!

But it may be profitable to take another view of the doctrine of preventing and restraining grace, which are made blessed to ourselves. And as in the former instance we found that somewhat, and that not inconsiderable, in a way of spiritual improvement, is capable of being gathered from the sin and suffering of others; perhaps on inquiry we shall find a wide door thrown open to our meditation, in tracing some of the numberless sin-preventing providences of our God, by which our lives have been marked. We might indeed as soon attempt the investigation of the human frame

in all its component parts, and dissect the ramifications of the blood vessels, as suppose a discovery can be attainable of the various ways and works of the Lord in his going before, surrounding, and following his mystical members in keeping them from falling. But though from our short-sighted faculties of vision, and especially on divine things, we can know nothing, or behold objects, but as through a glass darkly: yet the smallest glimpse of him, and the divine operations of his grace over his people, is enough to cheer the gloomiest path of our walk in life, and bring consolation in every hour.

The sin-preventing providences of our God, though enveloped with mystery, yet in some cases are as luminous as if shined on by a sun-beam. How many by sickness, by the seemingly thwarting dispensations of the Lord, unravelling all our own plans, and defeating all our own ways, have at length discovered that it was only thus by shutting up our path that, as the Lord saith by the prophet, we should not find our lovers, the heart is constrained to say as the church then did, "I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now!" Hosea ii. 7. It is storied of Basil, that though a rich partaker of grace, yet in his unrenewed nature he was the subject of many corrupt affections. But when at any time those incitements to lust seemed to be rising in rebellion, a violent head-ache took place, which totally disqualified him for the pursuit. Perhaps somewhat similar may be traced in many of the Lord's people now. Nay, who shall say, what restraints the Lord puts upon his people in numberless ways to keep them from their purpose. That sickness in ourselves, that unkindness we meet with from others, that loss of temporal wealth, or that persecution from the strife of tongues, all are like angels in disguise, which come with a frowning aspect, and smite smartly, as one

smote Peter in the prison, but ultimately as he did, bring life and liberty. The reader will do well to consider this personally. Perhaps his own history (and if he be a child of the regeneration, he will find his own history the sweetest book, next to the bible read) will furnish many a page to exemplify the same things in providences of a like nature.

And it is not the least, nor most inconsiderable part of the subject, when we can, and do, trace divine interpositions for the deliverance of his people, when every other cause appears to have been totally shut up for their escape. When the patriarch Abraham at the command of God, travelled toward the south, and came within the city of Abimelech, Sarah was seized upon for the king, and brought into his haram. Here apparently was no way to escape. But God interposed. By afflicting the king with a remora, all power of gratifying his lust was at once taken away, Gen. xx. When Jeroboam put forth his hand to seize God's messenger, he felt its sinew shrank and dried up; so that he could not pull it in again to him, 1 Kings xiii. 4. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision of the same nature are every day going on. So that it is only to square the past history of the godly gone before, with the lives of the faithful now, to discover that the same unerring watchfulness of our most gracious God, is as much wakeful now as then. It is blessed indeed, when the spiritual child of God sees it, and acknowledgeth the mercy. A most illustrious example we have of this in the case of the patriarch David. It appears from his history, that Nabal, a man of great wealth, held a feast, while David and his little army was little short of famishing. David sent a request to the wealthy man for a little supply for himself and soldiers. But Nabal was a churl and refused. And David in the warmth of the moment determined to destroy him and his house. But Abigail, the wife of

Nabal hastened with relief to David and his army, to prevent it. And when David by the expostulation of the woman came to himself, aided by sovereign grace, he cried out, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me! And blessed be thy advice! And blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and in avenging myself with mine own hand!" 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33. Here we see the blessed effect of sin-preventing providences! Here is the child of God blessing God the Author; blessing the means advised, and blessing the instrument, so that one blessing is upon another; and all to the divine glory! We may well adopt the words of the psalmist at the close of a beautiful illustration of divine mercies, and say, "Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord," Psalm cvii. 43.

## XLI.

AN APPEAL TO THE COMMON FEELINGS OF MANKIND, IN BEHALF OF THE NEGROES IN THE WEST INDIA ISLANDS, MORE ESPECIALLY ADDRESSED TO THE SUBJECTS OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE; THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF A LETTER TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ. M.P.

SIR,

I make no apology for this freedom. It would be an affront to you to offer any. The long and unwearied advocate which you have shewn yourself for African freedom, render this address to the public, through your medium, of all others peculiarly suitable. For indeed, my appeal to the common feelings of mankind on the subject, is but an echo to the one recently made by you upon the same occasion to the inhabitants of the British empire. In that address of your's, (a copy of which is now before me) your appeal is to every one, 'that hath any respect for justice, or any feelings of humanity.' Actuated by both, I am come forward at your call. And although it must be said, that before I had seen or heard of your appeal, I did endeavour to excite the attention of the public, as well from the press as the pulpit,* to the same great cause, as

* When I say, both from the *press* and the *pulpit*, I beg to state the circumstances. Immediately on the event which took place the last session in the House of Commons, in the decision against the manumission of slaves in the West India Islands, I drew up the following advertisement, and sent it to the Editor of one of the London papers; and which obtained an early admission in the 'Times,' of the 3rd of June last.

'Sir, from the statement given in one of your late papers of the result in the House of Commons, on the subject of the slave trade, the friends to the abolition are painfully led to behold the long-looked for hope of a termination to that disgraceful traffic in human blood, receding still from them; and now after nearly thirty years pursuit, like an *ignus fatuus*, eluding the grasp. From the observations made by one of the leaders in the administration, (and which gave a decided preponderancy to the subject) that 'on the score of property, it would be a breach of justice to the holders of slaves to give instant freedom,' a thought crossed my mind, which if followed up, and brought into action,

hath in the publication before me employed your pen; yet I should not have presumed in so personal a manner to have sent forth my appeal to British liberality, through your medium, had I not derived a seeming authority from thence. And whether the plan which I have to propose of unnerving the relentless arm of oppression now, and so long exercised on the defenceless negro, shall or shall not have your suffrage, I as-

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would at once do away the statesman's objection, and brighten again the cheering view of emancipation. I venture, therefore, upon your well-known urbanity, to request that it may be communicated through the medium of your extensive paper. Suppose a society were formed for raising by subscriptions and donations, a fund to purchase that part of the property of the plantations which consists in slaves; and suppose that the slaves so purchased, were to become the hired servants in those plantations, would not this ameliorate the condition of those wretched brethren of our common nature? And by thus raising up that class of beings to a certain degree of feeling as men, would it not tend to open the way for religious instruction, and thus not only soften the evils of the life which now is, but favour the hope for the attainment of the blessings of that which is to come?

'Is it asked from whence can the resources be gathered? I answer, from every feeling heart in the kingdom; yea, in the world. Never could a society be framed on principles more congenial to the very nature of man. Other institutions of charity have their opponents as well as their advocates; but here, there could be but one heart, and one soul. Let the experiment be made. Let the torch be lighted in the metropolis, by some of our leading men, in organizing a charity of this magnitude; and sure I am the flame will communicate like electricity, and ignite every city, town, village, and parish, through the land. Not a pulpit in the kingdom, whether in the establishment, or out of it, but would be opened to plead the affecting tale; and not a family but would feel alive, and aid in the contribution. Yea, the very poor of our own home, would enter into the common charities of nature, to relieve those more wretched poor abroad; and gladly from their little pittances, (little as it is well known they are) subscribe their weekly pence, as auxiliaries in the common cause.

'Allow me only to add, that that great man, be who he may, whether peer or commoner, will be still advanced in the scale of exaltation, and prove himself a good man, who first steps forward on this occasion. And the honour of taking the lead in such a service, will be more dignified than all the aggrandizement of rank and title.'

I said also that from the *pulpit*, as well as the *press*, I endeavoured to excite the public attention to this great subject; and which was done in a sermon preached at St Clement's church, in the Strand, June 11, following. There was no collection made at this time, as had been previously noticed in the advertisement there would not; my then object being only to give it publicity. But I had the high pleasure to hear that resolutions were made when the service was over, by certain persons present, of opulence, of engaging in annual subscriptions for ten years in succession to a considerable amount, as soon as the society shall be formed.

sume the confidence to count on your courtesy. The strong language you have used in your appeal to the inhabitants of the British empire, leaves every one without excuse who is not feelingly alive to an object of such magnitude. And every one that doth his best, (and none can do more) in following up your wishes, hath a special pleader in your own bosom for your favour. For myself, I desire to call into this service, all the energies both of my mind and body. And old as I am, and too far advanced in life to hope much from any exertions I am now capable of bringing; yet, if it were only to gladden the heart of the poor African, in telling him how truly I sympathize with him in his wrongs, and how earnestly I long for his deliverance from the iron yoke of his merciless oppressors; even this, could I do no more, would be to me a luxury of the highest kind. It would call up all that remains of the sensibilities of nature, not wholly worn out by age, and raise a glow of affection on my wrinkled cheek.

It is now considerably more than thirty years since many of the feeling part of the community in this land, took alarm at the horrid traffic in human blood, of those poor Africans; and contemplating it nationally, as a sin of no small malignity, began to arouse from the indolence of inattention, and directed their united exertions in the attempt of the manumission of the slaves in the West India Colonies. Committees were formed in different parts of the kingdom, in co-operation for this purpose. Many and various publications issued from the press, to set forth the nefarious principles of the slave trade. And the pulpit, no less, sounded loudly to the same purport, in decrying the baleful transaction. I had the honour (if it can be deemed an honour, to have been engaged in what hath proved to be visionary) to have been one of a committee, at that time formed in Plymouth, for this purpose. At the request of several members of that society, I

preached a sermon in my church, in favour of the abolition; and which, at the same request, was afterwards published. But what was the *cui bono* of the whole? Nothing! Matters remained the same. Many and powerful arguments were brought forward, which indeed needed no arguments to prove what was then as it is now, a plain matter of fact. But the slave trade continued. And the slave trade still continues. Neither doth it require the spirit of prophecy to predict that it will still continue, while it opens, and keeps open, such a resource of profit to the interested of every description and character, though at the price of human blood.

I pause to remark what multitudes of those unhappy race of men have gone into eternity, unbenefited by the kind intention of the friends to the abolition, since the original exertions were first made for them more than thirty years since. Many, no doubt, whose hopes were first excited by those exertions, and who had cherished those hopes from year to year, that their liberation was at hand. But could it be calculated what troops since that period, through the intermediate space of more than thirty years, to the present hour, have followed each other to the grave? Could it be registered, the tale of woe, in those deaths, with what broken hearts, under an accumulation of the most poignant sorrow they have pined away in their rigorous servitude? Could any arithmetic be found to number these events, what would our views be of the sad history of West India slavery? If it be true that there are no less than eight hundred thousand of those captives in men, women, and children, under this system of tyranny; against which, however winked at by man, the law of God hath fixed his artillery! And if it be true also, that according to the ratio of the bills of mortality, one in every thirty dieth in every year; then will it follow, that the whole of that

race which were in being when the attempt for emancipation was first made, are all swept off; and every future exertion for them is for ever done away. And what an army would the eight hundred thousand form, could they be brought from their graves, and like soldiers march in file before the beholder?

I pause again to ask the question—Is it possible that any man, (much less any body of men) can still be amused with the hope after thirty years fruitless experiment, that any given time in future will afford more favourable views? Hath not every exertion been made that can be made, in that way hitherto attempted? And hath not all that the wisdom of man could devise, during the long period before stated, been called forth, until it hath exhausted all the powers of oratory? And have not those unanswerable statements been backed by all the principles of justice, religion, and humanity; so that nothing remains to be said which hath not been already said upon the occasion, over and over, and over again; and is not the result in the present moment, as precisely the same as when it began? Nay, will it not everlastingly continue, as long as it hath to contend with the overwhelming opposition of interested men?

In proposing, therefore, an immediately opposite plan for the liberation of the negro, I am not doing it from motives of novelty, much less contention. Glad, very glad shall I be to find at some future day, the freedom of the slave is made general by the act of the legislature; and that the authority of the state, and the bounty of the public, in such acts of mercy, co-operate and combine. But in the mean time, until this desirable end be accomplished, I would call off the attention from what is at present visionary, to what is substantial; and in appealing to the common feelings of mankind, in behalf of this wretched race of men, the negroes in the West India Islands, I would shew that instead

of looking elsewhere for their relief, the remedy is in our own power.

In the prosecution of this subject, I have proposed in the title-page, first to take a short retrospect of the history itself; that is, as far as the history is connected with the exertions made in times past for the liberation of the negro from slavery; and then to state the plain and simple plan, which I humbly conceive will be found competent for the accomplishment of that most desirable purpose, arising from the bounty of the realm. Let me not however be mistaken in this statement; I do not mean to tread over the ground already so fully trodden, when speaking of those much injured beings whose cause I would advocate, as if I was going to delineate their history of sufferings. These things have been most amply stated and as fully proved. And it were to hold a taper to the sun, with the hope to increase the light at mid-day, to suppose any further recital by way of conviction can be necessary. The man who professeth to know any thing of the discipline exercised on those beings of our common nature in the West India Islands, and at the same time thinks lightly of their sufferings, such an one is callous to all impression, and his feelings are as truly paralyzed, as bodies which are come within the influence of the Torpedo. With such, it were wasteful both of time and labour to contend. In vain doth the light shine, when the eye is resolutely shut not to see it. And by an authority not to be questioned, we are taught that there are some on whom no persuasion can operate; like the "deaf adder, which stoppeth her ears." From such I turn away. My appeal is to those who have feeling. And in every breast not seared against this common principle, there is that in which must awaken sympathy.

In the retrospect of the history I have in view, my province will be limited within very narrow bounds. I shall only have to gather into one focus, some of the

luminous observations which have been emitted in favour of the negro emancipation from the most able statesmen, as they followed each other in succession. And from the invariable want of success which hath followed all their powerful statements, nothing (according to my apprehension) can render it more palpably clear and evident, that somewhat more than mere conviction is necessary, to do justice to this too long oppressed class of beings.

Without looking further back than the year 1788, it is well known an hope was then excited by the friends of humanity, that the iniquitous traffic in human blood would be stopped by an act of the legislature. In consequence of this prospect, numberless petitions emanated from various parts of the kingdom, praying for the auspicious event. An alarm as instantly took place, by all the interested in the profits of slavery. And well aware that nothing attacheth itself so strongly to the human mind as self-preservation, an hue and cry was at once raised, that if such an event was suffered, an insurrection of the blacks would immediately follow; all the whites to a man, more or less, would be massacred; and the islands be deluged with blood! To these strong representations were added other statements, namely, that from the moment the question was agitated in the house, the negroes began to feel their consequence, and looked forward with the assured confidence of certain emancipation! Every vessel it was said that arrived from England, was hailed with delight as it approached the shore. And every day, more and more, as the time they had formed to themselves of receiving the joyful news drew nigh, they were on the tip-toe of expectation. The newspapers from London were sought for with the utmost earnestness, and read with equal avidity.

I will not unnecessarily swell those pages with the many ill-founded and highly improbable statements

which the abettors of slavery brought forward at that time to support the system. They had their full weight of influence, as was intended they should on the credulous and simple; while the more considerate and sober of mankind at once rebutted them altogether. But the event terminated as was expected, in favour of the slave-owner; and the negro had to dread, as was very natural to expect he would, an increased oppression and cruelty, even from the attempt. My present province is to shew some of the striking, and in themselves unanswerable arguments, which were brought forward on the occasion, by the then great statesmen of the day. And although in the eventual result of the business they proved nugatory, yet were they such as could not but carry conviction with them, even in the breasts of those whose interests inclined to another bias.

Among the many of our great men who took the lead in favour of the poor oppressed negro, the Marquis Townsend appeared eminently conspicuous. He reprobated the idea of an insurrection being dreaded in the event of their manumission, as chimerical and childish in the extreme. 'As if,' said his lordship, 'the poor negro would begin to lift his head in insurrection from his long borne cruelty, when the cruelty itself had ceased, and rendered that insurrection unnecessary! As if a prisoner in confinement would then and not before begin to unforge his chains, and scale the walls of his prison, at the hazard of his life, in the moment he heard the door of his dungeon unlocking for his release, and the gates of his prison-house were throwing open to set him free!' Neither was the assertion less futile and preposterous, which represented those degraded outcasts of society as waiting the arrival of every vessel from England, on the tip-toe of expectation; while unremitting labour under the unceasing smart of the cart-whip allowed no time for thought;

and too long inurement to misery, had rendered the mind hopeless. And if the subject and sorrows of slavery, were not too serious to be treated with lightness, it might excite the smile of the moment, to hear the opponents of those miserable creatures' emancipation, describing them as reading the English newspapers, and becoming politicians in Jamaica. If this be not adding insult to cruelty, the word hath no meaning. Alas! who that hath personally seen the miseries of slavery in the West Indies, or heard the perpetual crack of the cart-whip sounding over the whole island in Jamaica; or read the very fewest pages in the sorrowful but fully authenticated history of those oppressed beings, made in the form indeed of men, but goaded on to labour as brutes, who is there that is in the smallest degree acquainted with these truths, could give credit, even for the moment only to such assertions? Employed, as it is notoriously known they are employed, day by day, from the first dawn of the morning, to the latest light in the sky at night, what space would be allowed them for reading? Nay, how few among them have the ability of reading! 'To every man (said one of the writers of their history) who hath resided in the West Indies, it must have been known not only to be as false, but preposterous also, as it would be to hear a Jamaica legislator gravely affirm in the house of their assembly, that the horses in England read the Jamaica newspapers. I can think,' added he, 'of no parallel, which can more aptly describe the case. The slaves in Jamaica are as universally ignorant of letters, as the horses are in England.'

If from hence we pass on to the days of Mr. Burke, at the time when he took an active part in the subject of emancipation, we discover the same vein of reasoning. That great statesman gave all his strength of argument in favour of the poor negro. And such was his strength of argument, that one of his cotemporaries drawing his

eulogy did it in these words: 'A man,' said he, 'who left no part of the interests of mankind unexamined, and who brought with him more human wisdon in discussing every subject he attempted to investigate, than any man I ever knew.' This very able statesman, upon every occasion relating to the unhappy slaves in the West India settlements, decidedly exerted himself in their behalf. He strongly opposed the measures which were adopted, in what is called the colonial laws. He framed himself a plan for ameliorating the condition of the slaves; and which could he have succeeded in his design, was to have been acted and enforced by parliament alone, without the intervention, or even the consent of the colonial legislature. But this great man, of whom it is said that 'he left no part of the interests of mankind *unexamined*,' left the interests of the poor Africans in slavery at Jamaica *unredressed;* for he never lived to accomplish a single act of legislation in their favour.

Mr. Fox, as appears from all his statements on the subject of the West India slavery, was an uniform friend to the abolition, and an open and avowed enemy to the whole system of slavery. He contended (and with that eloquence for which his speeches in the House of Commons obtained for him the appellation of the British Cicero) that on the simple principle of equity, the very basis on which slavery was founded, as well as every part of the superstructure, had no legitimate authority either in the law of God or man. 'Personal freedom,' he asserted, 'is in the very constitution of man. And whoever deprives a fellow-creature of this right, is criminal in so doing. And he also, who withholds from another that right, when it is in his power to restore it, is no less criminal.' A statement this as plain as it is just; and as clear as if written with a sun beam.

Mr. Pitt, no less, however his long administration fa-

voured not the opportunity, according to his view of things, for the emancipation of the sooty sons and daughters of Africa; dragged from their own shore to be slaves to others, in a foreign one; yet if we may form just conclusions of the real sentiments of the man by his candid and honest acknowledgments as a minister, he very strongly leaned towards the manumission of this oppressed race of beings. Indeed, he extended the view of the liberation of slaves, in point of moral good, much beyond their mere emancipation. He considered the advantages which would result from such an act of justice, as ultimately becoming not more beneficial to the negro than to his owner. For he very properly and justly remarked, 'that if in the place of slaves, who naturally consider their interest as in direct opposition to their master's, and who therefore are viewing them with an eye of constant suspicion and jealousy, if both slave and master were brought into a more favourable opinion and regard for each other, there will be created from the slaves a body of valuable citizens, forming a part of the same community with themselves, and having one common interest in the security and prosperity of the whole. And,' added Mr. Pitt, 'if you restore to this degraded race the true feelings of men, by taking them out from among the order of brutes, and placing them on a level with the rest of the human species, they will then work with that energy which is natural to men, and their labour will be productive in a thousand ways above what it hath yet been; as the labour of a man must be more productive that that of a beast.'

I pause to ask, on what principles are we to account for such just and conclusive reasoning on the subject of emancipation, and from one at the helm of affairs for years together; and yet, at length, that this great man, with his great mind, should have terminated his ministerial career, and his life together, while leaving this

degraded race of beings (as he himself designated them) still among the order of brutes? Must there not have been some very powerful principle thwarting his wishes, when a man is constrained to suffer the reverse to take place of what he confesseth to be right? Perhaps Mr. Pitt had similar apprehensions to what hath since been stated, 'that on the score of property it would be a breach of justice to the owners of slaves to give them freedom, without remuneration to their owners.' If so, then is the subject fully developed; and by so much the plan which I have to propose will I hope meet, and do away the objection. Surely, in public liberality, it will be easy to find adequate resources of compensation, for what otherwise might be injurious to private property. And if this hath been the strong hold (as unquestionably it hath all along been) for more than thirty years, by which the fortress of slavery hath stood out the seige, impregnable to all the assailants, by this golden key an entrance will at once be made into the garrison, without further assaults. I stay not to remark in the event of such an auspicious victory, what a day of rejoicing it will be to the poor slave, (for this is too obvious to need being noticed) but I would beg the nation at large, man by man, to consider how effectually it will do away the long reproach, and just vituperation, which in spite of all that hath been said of British justice and charity, hath ever been, and ever must be, till removed, a foul blot in the English escutcheon.

But I must not close my review of this history, until that I have brought forward the sentiments of another eminent statesman of the day on the same subject; and which will be found to be in perfect correspondence in every thing that is noble and liberal, with all the former.

Speaking of the daring attempt set up by certain characters to justify the right of slavery, Mr. Canning

observed, (for it is him of whom I now speak) 'Never, (said he) even in the practical application of that detested and pernicious doctrine of the rights of man, hath the word *right* been so shamefully affixed to murder—to devastation—to the invasion of public independence—to the pollution and destruction of private happiness—to gross and unpalliated injustice—to the spreading of misery and mourning over the earth—the massacre of innocent individuals—and to the extermination of offending nations, as when the right to trade in man's blood was asserted, by the enlightened government of a civilized country.'

Speaking of the unnatural state of slavery, and of the everlasting ill effects which must necessarily arise out of it, the same eloquent statesman observed; 'There is somewhat (said he) in the nature of absolute authority in the relation between master and slave, which renders despotism in all cases and under all circumstances an incompetent and unsure executor, even of its own provisions, in favour of the objects of its power.'

And upon another occasion, when somewhat had been said on the subject of the negro's sufferings, as if nothing but dire necessity could warrant the calling forth the interference of parliament with the colonial jurisdiction on the occasion, this great man observed, 'When that necessity arose, his voice should be fearlessly raised in its favour.' All which confirms the doctrine of slavery is uncongenial to the very character of a Briton; and that however selfish interests may have first led to the oppression, and the same corrupt bias of our nature hath prompted to the support of it, the system itself is repugnant to the nature of man, and is anomalous to his very constitution.

I have now finished what I proposed, in taking a retrospective view of the history itself, as far as relates to the exertions which have been so long called forth

for the manumission of the negroes. I have here recapitulated some of the most powerful arguments of the most powerful speakers among the great statesmen of the day. I have shewn that all that eloquence, reason, and justice could devise, to magnify the intolerance and cruelty of the measure hath been done; and so fully and completely done, that language might be challenged to produce a single topic omitted, to carry conviction to the breast of every man, not steeled against all impression; that slavery is, and must be, not only a despotism unbecoming in man to man, but a daring insult to the majesty of God!

And now having waded through the history in the several statements of those great men, if we take the subject in all its bearings, and the question be proposed, what hath been done in behalf of the negro in our West India Islands? The answer is enough to appal every feeling mind with the deepest sorrow. After more than thirty years of the most animated exertions, for obtaining what in the very blush of the business, can be considered no other than as a common right of man with man, the slave in the British colonies of the West Indies, continues still the slave, groaning under oppression as fully heaped as ever! And while, as a subject, he is justly entitled to an equal right of freedom with every other subject in the realm, he, and he only, by a misnomer peculiarly his own, is singled out both for subject and slavery; and to entail the same inheritance upon his hapless posterity. And if misery so superlatively great, can find additional aggravation from collateral circumstances, it might make the brim-full cup of bitterness run over, to know that in the moment of his unparalleled sufferings, he belongs to a nation which prides herself as possessed of the wisest and best administered laws of any kingdom upon earth; whose charities are the wonder of the world, and whose

monuments of British munificence stand unrivalled in history!

In the contemplation of such misery, so highly reproachful as it is to the whole community, and in which, let it not be overlooked, every individual of the nation, however incompetent in himself to give redress, must justly bear his part, will it be deemed, can it indeed be deemed presumptuous in the humblest to propose means, if any can be devised, upon constitutional principles for relief? If by stepping aside out of the common routine of things, instead of supplicating redress in a *public* way by an act of the legislature, (where perhaps for many state reasons it may not be feasible) we seek in *private* generosity the means of ameliorating the wretched state of these our fellow men, and fellow subjects; can such a plan be thought exceptionable? Here we shall have nothing to contend with from the sophistry of the interested, or the contumacy of the unfeeling. Here we shall at once spring a mine, whose spontaneous resources from time to time, will supply the bullion, for forming current coin to satisfy the slave-holder, while giving deliverance to the slave.

I said, 'stepping aside out of the common routine of things,' for the accomplishment of this purpose. But I recall the expression. It is not out of the common routine to supplicate charity in this way. The plan of appealing to the feelings of mankind in cases for the public good, is so general in the present day of the world, that scarce a month but what teems with somewhat new on the subject. Let the humblest of the humble be therefore allowed to come forward on the same plea of charity. And as the long oppressed slave to the number of eight hundred thousand souls, across the Atlantic, dare not lift up a voice for themselves, let their cause plead for them.

This is the name by which this charity is to be designated: "the Society for the purchasing the Emancipation of Slaves, in the West-india Islands, by voluntary contribution."—And who will, or can say nay, to an object which attacheth itself to the universal feeling of all mankind? What single voice from any individual, who bears the image of human nature, shall be raised against it? If, indeed, the wisdom of parliament, by any legislative act, had endeavoured to soften the rigour of slavery, and by which change of system the property of the slave-holder might (even but if in idea) have been lessened, it is possible that then complaints would have been made against it. But here in the proposed society for the purchasing plantations, with a view to ameliorate the miseries of the negro, even the very planter himself must be constrained to give in his suffrage of approbation to the common cause. And not a dissenting voice will any longer be heard to stop the hand of mercy towards those long oppressed captives, when the act itself by which it is done borrows its name from our common nature, and is called humanity.

And if, to rescue such a multitude of our fellow creatures from the horde, and from the harness as brutes; if to bring back to the original state of man, in the class of which, a power whose wisdom it were a folly to question, and whose ordinations it were worse than folly to oppose, but hath evidently designed them: if to shelter human flesh from the merciless lashes of the cart whip, the horrible and painful load of the chains, and the galling cramps of the iron collar; if to save beings of the same nature and feelings with ourselves, from being sold as chattels, and removed as the unconscious herd from one place to another; if to prevent the tearing children from their mothers, and mothers from their children, whose shrieks at parting have been known not unfrequently to rend the air with their un-

availing lamentations; if to put a stop to the most indecent and libidinous transactions, too immodest to be named, and too disgraceful to our common nature, to be made the subject of publicity; if to raise the human affections from the depressed state of ignorance and barbarism, to the consciousness of right and wrong, and by the allurements of religion, that softener of woe, to bear them through the sorrows of this life, until they are brought into the possession of that upper and brighter world, "where the servant is free from his master;" if these, and numberless other mercies included in them, be in the eventual consequences of this charity, then will the Society for the purchasing the Emancipation of Slaves in the West Indies, by voluntary contributions, stand on higher ground than the highest of human institutions, and put in for her boon, unrivalled, and without a compeer, for public favour.

I said in the title-page of this appeal, that the plan for the accomplishment of those beneficent purposes, is short and simple, and as practicable as it is plain. And I repeat it. For if resources be found in the bounty of the public to the purchase of plantations, there will be no difficulty in the carrying of it into execution. The leading points for the due government of the modern treatment of those long oppressed men are comprised within a narrow compass. When the society shall be in possession of funds sufficient to the purchase of one estate,* and a man† of approved merit, judgment, and

* The purchase of one estate.] Happily for the experiment there are continual opportunities for the purchasing of plantations in the West India Islands. I have before me on the table an advertisement to this purport of no less than seven at this time in the island of Jamaica. And it is too well known to need much observation, such is the depressed state of those settlements, that with all the rigour in exacting the labours of the negro by the instruments used to goad on to service, the greater part are unproductive to the interest of the owners. Indeed! indeed! how can they flourish under such awful proceedings of cruelty, which is as daring to God as it is offensive to man!

† A man of approved merit, &c.] Such an one hath already tendered his services who is altogether competent to the work. He hath resided fifteen years

humanity be found to superintend it; a second and a third plantation, as finances favour the ability of purchasing, will follow; and thus, by gradual, but sure means, the condition of the negro will soon begin to wear a different aspect.*

The government of those purchased estates upon a new system of things will chiefly consist in a few leading articles. The first and most prominent feature will be the total suppression of all punishments by instruments of cruelty. No more the cart whip, the collar, and the chains. All such will be done away. Discipline there will be,† as in all well regulated societies and families there must be. But this will not be com-

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in Jamaica. He brings with him credentials of character of the most approved kind, and from persons in this kingdom of the highest respectability. The sole motive for his volunteering in this service, is to be instrumental in the cause of religion and humanity, without an eye to personal profit.

* A second and a third plantation, &c.] The very slow means for making any great progress in a work of such magnitude, as the ameliorating eight hundred thousand slaves by the purchase of one estate, and then a second, and a third, may strike the mind of some, as if the business was rather chimerical. But let no one too hastily leap to such a conclusion. If the blessing of the Lord be on the society, (which is humbly sought, and faithfully believed will) many an estate may soon be purchased when he disposeth both the means and the opportunity, who saith, "the silver is mine, and the gold is mine." And who shall circumscribe the limits of good even in the purchase of one estate? If I were a planter in any of the West India Islands, and my neighbour in his plantation, carried on the government of his estate without cart whip or iron collars, without drivers and other hirelings of cruelty, and if I behold cheerfulness in himself and servants, and a prosperous state of culture in all his possessions, and above all, if that almighty God who hath all hearts at his disposal, prompted me to a serious consideration of the cause, what would be the result? Many a planter it is to be hoped will be so wrought upon.

† Discipline there will be, &c.] If my information be correct, there is an account somewhere of a Mr. Steele in the Island of Barbadoes, whose plantation was governed without whip or chain. He instituted a court of magistracy among the negroes of his estate themselves, over which he himself presided. So that they judged each other as a kind of juror of conduct. And the history states that the happiest effects resulted from it. And I believe that there is a plan not unsimilar in the royal navy, where in cases of dishonesty or any petty offences not necessary to be made known to the superior officers, they set as jurors upon the offender. And it is said that the whole ship's company sometimes are so indignant upon those occasions, where their messmates have acted in a way to bring trouble or disgrace upon them, which might if known, tend to lessen their liberty from their officers, that the punishments they award are more severe than would have been the sentence of a court martial.

mitted to unfeeling drivers, or oppressive masters. And even to contemplate this change alone, if there were no other in the circumstances of the poor negro, what a ray of comfort at once breaks in upon him, when such as have hitherto exercised their uncontrolled despotism, will exercise it no more. The second feature for ameliorating the condition of the negro in the purchased plantation will be, to hold out the prospect of reward by way of stimulus to good behaviour; that in all cases where encouragement can be given, without apprehension of danger, kind treatment may supersede the necessity of coercive measures. And when it be considered in how many instances this race of men hath manifested great quickness and apprehension of mind and talent, it may very fairly be concluded, that among the mass, there will be found not a few capable of cherishing generous and enlarged ideas. When such therefore are brought forth into action, under the fostering care of liberal minds like their own, their energies of character will appear, they will amply recompence the favours they receive, and give testimony of their consciousness in being raised from degradation and misery, by a cheerfulness of countenance and gratitude to their benefactors to which they have been long strangers. A third principle of action in the government of purchased plantations by this society will be, to place the negroes on the estate in classes of servants, and not slaves; not by giving them their freedom at once, but holding it forth to them after a certain period of time as a remuneration for their labour: and thus making them the purchasers of their own happiness, which will be thereby much more sweet, and be considered by them much more valuable. And when the purchased plantation hath advanced thus far, under the blessing of the Lord, and the negro raised from his present degradation and misery, to the cheerful, though still humble rank in society, where the pro-

vidence of God hath placed him; when his industry will be excited more from the hope of reward, than the fear of punishment; more from willingness than constraint; and the confidence and affection becoming from man to man, of honest integrity on his part, and kindness from the other, being mutually observed throughout the plantation between the servant and his master; if these things are happily accomplished, which is the great desideratum of this society, the history will form an epoch truly illustrious to the British nation.

It is not my intention, for indeed it doth not come within my province to draw out the code of laws, by which this society is to be regulated. But when the same comes to be organized by those with whom the right is, and who are fully competent to the service, it will be formed not only on true constitutional principles, but sound policy also. And I am authorized to say, that before it be acted upon, it will be brought forward for the general approbation of the public. And in the mean time, it will be matter of satisfaction to all that take interest in this infant institution, formed for the eventual happiness of the negro, to be told that a peer of high national character hath consented to preside over the society. And a barrister of eminency in his profession, hath gratuitously undertaken to frame a digest of the laws proper for its regulation.

Under such auspicious prospects, "the Society for the purchasing the Emancipation of Slaves in the West India Islands by voluntary contributions" opens. And an appeal is here made to the common feelings of mankind for its support. And it is not too much to say, that every noble and generous mind cannot but take part in it; nay, it is impossible but that every noble and generous mind should feel interested as in one common event, and the whole British nation be

seen as coming forth with their free-will offerings. But a short space, and it is hoped, that establishments in every city, town, village, and parish, throughout the kingdom will arise, and committees, and auxiliary committees, be formed to co-operate with the society in London. Not an individual of the whole realm will there be unfeeling in a concern of such magnitude, but the high and the low, the rich and the poor, young men and maidens, old men and children, will be anxious to have their names enrolled among that dignified order who are of the society "to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke." In a word, the ice once broken, and the long and hitherto impenetrable frost now thawed, this vessel of mercy will launch forth for the West India Islands with her golden cargo where slavery hath too long reigned with despotic sway over the negro, but where now will be unfurled the streamer of freedom and humanity; and guided at the helm by the Lord of Hosts, her charter will be the greatest and most valuable ever delivered on landing; "in bringing liberty to the captive, in binding up the broken in heart; opening the prison doors to them that are bound, and proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord."

## XLII.

### THE VILLAGE APPRENTICE.

It was at the close of the evening when I had just finished my meditations, and was about to return to family worship, that a great noise in the village drew my attention to the window. Upon throwing open the casement, and looking out to make inquiry into the cause of the bustle I saw, I was told that Mary Giles, it was supposed, had thrown herself into the river, and drowned herself; and that they were going to drag under the bushes in the deep water, to discover, if possible, the body.

'Poor creature!' said one of the women in the throng; 'poor creature!' said she, 'I hope all her troubles with this life are now ended—she hath been cruelly treated!'

I had before heard that this poor girl was under a very severe master, and therefore my surprize was not so much at the woman's feeling as her ignorance. Mary Giles was one of those children of the poor, who from being, as it is called, chargeable to the parish, had been taken from her parents, and at the usual age of putting out children of the poor, had been apprenticed to a farmer not remarkable for much tenderness.

My mind was instantly led out into a train of reflections. Alas! thought I, here is a child of the poor, because she is poor, obliged to serve a hard master, whose wages are punishment, and "instruments of cruelty are in his habitation!" and what a melancholy termination—from one evil to a greater! Alas! what a mass of complicated woe hath been produced from the one great evil of sin! From this fatal source both the servant and the master are alike miserable; she in her poverty, and he in his cruelty. And though the

corrupt and poisoned fountain issues in different directions, and in a thousand streams, yet unless, like the bitter waters healed by the prophet's cruse of salt, grace be given, and the spring itself cured, all that flows from it must be bitterness, which only empties itself into the gulph of endless misery.

Had not inclination from the common feelings of humanity prompted me, a sense of duty would have constrained me also to hasten to the search of this poor child. I therefore instantly left my study, and joined the throng. The villagers had already searched above the bridge near to the mill, before I came, but to no purpose; and now were about to search the river below it. There was the mother and father of Mary Giles in the party, making sad lamentations for their child, and the general voice was very loud in crying out against the barbarity of the master.

It would have been like music out of season to have reproved at the moment—consolation seemed necessary. Nevertheless I ventured to observe, that the harsh usage of the master would not have led his apprentice to a deed so desperate, had she been brought up in the fear of the Lord. Wretched as she might be under his brutality, she rushed into far greater misery by the daring sin against God of self-murder. And (taking advantage of the moment, while the feelings of all around me were awakened, and the more susceptible of impressions) I added, 'may the Lord give to parents, and to all that have the charge of children, however poor in worldly circumstances, an earnest concern for the improvement of their minds: and now that sunday schools are so general in most villages, that they would be anxious their children might partake of the blessing. If this was more generally done, and while the rising generation were taught the word of God abroad, the parents would pray with them and pray for them at home—this under God's blessing

would greatly tend to procure for them the comfort and happiness "of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."'

I was interrupted from saying more by a voice which at a little distance cried out—'here she is! here she is!' We all hastened to the spot from whence the sound came, and soon discovered her. She was standing, or rather like one half inclined to fall, in the midst of a furze brake in a corner of the hedge; and so hid away she had been, that but for looking with earnestness, she would not have been visible to any passing by.

She burst into tears on being discovered, as if sorry at being found, and dreading what would follow. The poor parents cried also with increasing weeping, a mingled joy and sorrow. For my own part, I stood looking on, not knowing what to say. I was much struck with the child's figure, in which, amidst all the poverty and wretchedness, both in dress and a half-famished countenance, there was a certain somewhat I cannot describe, but wonderfully taking. I felt all the feelings of charity interested. Though I had before heard a little of her history in the sad place of servitude she had, I did not know her person. She was about eleven years of age. Her looks seemed to ask for mercy. She had eaten nothing for near two days, and had been concealed in this place from the early part of the day before, when she ran from her master's house.

Some one, I suppose from among the crowd, had hastened to her master with an account of her being found and alive; for it was but a few minutes from the discovery before he made his appearance; glad, no doubt, that the report of her having thrown herself into the river was not true, but with a countenance of great anger, he seized her by the hand to take her home. The father and mother both implored him with

tears, not to beat her.—I interposed my authority to the same amount; and when he saw me he relaxed; the features of his face became somewhat changed, and he promised that she should be treated kindly. The poor child brightened up a little at these assurances, and walked away with her master. Here for the present the matter ended. The villagers dispersed, and the whole was quiet again.

But the subject itself became too interesting to be hastily passed over. Every thing in a country parish is more or less momentous from the contractedness of the circle in which it moves. The happiness or misery of its inhabitants is diffusive, and form one principle, like the concerns of a commonwealth. I determined to get the poor child freed from her master; but having secured her from any farther ill treatment for the present, I judged it proper, on many accounts, to let all parties sleep over what had happened. In the mean time, I thought to avail myself of the opportunity which offered on the next day, being Sunday, and from the pulpit, touched upon certain points, which, under the divine blessing might be productive of good.

It was soon known through the whole village, and the neighbouring hamlets, that the parson had been present when Mary Giles was found, and her master took her home; and as the parishioners were well acquainted with my method of preaching, in raising practical improvements from any striking providences which occurred, they fully expected that I should say somewhat upon the present occasion; so that the church the next day was uncommonly full. I did, as I always do, take the Lord Jesus both for my text and sermon; in him I find every thing to dwell upon, in holding forth the word of life, in all the great branches of religion and morality, and never can be at a loss for a subject suited to all wants, whether pertaining to matters of a

temporal, spiritual, or eternal nature. My maxim is, to adopt the plan of Philip, who, when he went down to the city of Samaria, preached Christ unto them.

It was no difficult matter, from such a text and sermon, to preach the horrible conduct of cruelty, nor the blessed consequences of gentleness. Every thing that is amiable and praiseworthy in the kind master, the faithful servant, and all the relative situations in life, the lovely example of Jesus furnished out for discourse. No state, no circumstances, no condition but what in this one view of the Saviour the subject met us; but what above all afforded me full scope to dwell upon in preaching Jesus, was from holding up to every one's view the awful state to which the fall had reduced our whole nature; to prove the absolute necessity of seeking pardon and mercy in his blood; here all needful salvation, and here alone could it be found. I finished my discourse with a general appeal to the several characters present, and sent them home with more awakened earnestness than when they came, that there was more in religion than the name, and "that if any man had not the Spirit of Christ, he was none of his."

I went the following morning to visit poor Mary Giles and her master, with an intention to prosecute the plan I had before determined upon, to free her from his government.

The farmer had been in expectation of my visit, as was evident from the manner in which he received me. He looked ashamed, and no doubt my looks indicated displeasure. Indeed the affair required it.

It will not be as interesting to my readers to know what I said, as to be informed of the consequence of my reproof. He did, as all sinners unawakened by grace, and untouched by true repentance, always do, attempt to deny the charge, and to blame, as our first parents did each other, the girl, rather than himself.

And I, on my part, aimed to fasten on his mind the whole guilt of the child's running away from his brutality. He seemed to feel for the moment, somewhat for his own personal danger, in the issue had Mary Giles been found dead. For I assured him, had that been the case, I myself would certainly have come forward to institute a court of inquiry into his conduct. And at all events, I told him, whether or not he would have been found guilty, without doubt he would have held up his hand at the bar of the assizes. He looked alarmed at the idea, and I availed myself of it, to dwell the longer upon the awfulness of such a situation.

I detain the reader in this part of the history, just to remark, how necessary it is, when we have to do with such characters, on whose minds no impressions can be made of love, to make the stronger passions to be felt of fear. Many a bad man is compelled to restrain his cruelty, in prospect of the gallows, who would never remit his oppression from any other motives. And if this little narrative should fall into the hands of any one who lives in the neighbourhood of a harsh and cruel master, I could recommend this plan to be adopted by way of cure. If it were not for making a digression from the history of poor Mary Giles, I could relate an instance of a similar nature, where I had occasion to use the very method I am now recommending with the greatest success. The mistress of a servant girl, in the street where I then lived, exercised great severity over the poor creature, and the cry of the girl during these seasons of punishment was frequently heard. I took occasion, therefore, one day, after a noise of this kind as usual had taken place, to call upon the master and mistress of this family, and observed to them, that if this girl should run away, and consequently disappear, or if by sudden death, which was not impossible, from various causes, or of short sickness, the girl was no more, I should consider

myself called upon, from common principles of humanity, (and I believe many in the neighbourhood would think the same) to look into the cause of her death or departure, in consequence of the well known cruelty she experienced. I cannot describe the effect this address had upon the countenance both of the master and mistress. An alarm took place in their minds. And while, I am sure, had I used all the entreaty in the world with them to stop, or soften the severity of their correction, no one good would have resulted from it; nay, perhaps, the poor creature under their harrow would have felt yet more for my interference; by thus rousing their fears to the prospect of personal disgrace and danger, a change instantly took place in their conduct towards the servant, and very shortly after they thought it prudent to part with her, and the girl got into a better place of service.

But to return. I gave the farmer to understand, that it was my determination to free Mary Giles from her apprenticeship for his cruelty towards her, proofs of which he was well aware I could bring forward towards the accomplishment of my wishes. I had no doubt (and I believe that he himself, I told him, was very conscious of the same) but that the village at large would come forward upon the occasion, if called upon. He heard me with a kind of sullen reserve, and said, he did not care what became of her for his part. If the justices freed her they might. I was glad to find that I had so far succeeded to my wishes, and therefore observing to him, that as this was the case, I would now, with his consent, request the justice, when I next saw him, to have Mary Giles's indentures made over from him to me; and in the mean time, I would take home my little charge with me immediately. 'Very well,' said he. 'Where is she?' I replied. The child was called. 'Mary,' I said, 'will you go and live with me?' 'If you please, sir,' she said. 'Come

then, bid the farmer good by.' She did so; and we walked away together.

In the accomplishment of this purpose, I had many objects in view; I not only rescued a poor child from tyranny, but by this act left her tyrant to the reflections of his own mind; and by the consequence in which such an act held him up to general notice, compelled him in some measure to carry himself with more moderation to his whole family. Moreover, the matter itself became a lesson of caution to all severe masters in the neighbourhood. Every one was taught hereby that cruelty should not pass unnoticed and unredressed. It is wonderful to conceive into how many departments, and upon how many different minds such an occurrence operated, and what a world of good is done by little events of this nature. The subject of Mary Giles became the general topic of conversation through the whole village. Every feeling heart expressed joy in her deliverance; and even those who thought the correction of apprentices a proper thing, yet confessed, in her instance, it was carried to an excess indeed. So that it was with universal consent and pleasure the neighbourhood heard that Mary Giles was turned over from the farmer to me.

I brought home my new apprentice, and presented her to my family. 'See,' I said, 'the child that but a few mornings since was supposed to have drowned herself, is come to live with us; and a good child I hope she will be.' Mary wept. 'Go, Mary,' I said, 'and call your parents; let them know the change.'

Mary ran away, and soon brought her father and mother, to whom I related the particulars of what had passed at the house of her late master. They expressed much joy and thankfulness at the event; and all parties seemed to be well pleased in the prospect o Mary's new situation.

I stop the reader once more from the immediate pro-

secution of the history to remark, how often by little circumstances and the unlikeliest means, the highest and most interesting events in life are brought about. Here was a poor parish apprentice, from the brutality of her master introduced into a family, from whence all that afterwards occurred in her history originated. Had her master been less unkind—had the alarm of her having drowned herself (and which was never in the child's thoughts) not taken place—had the village not noticed the matter—had the noise not reached my window—had the thing itself appeared to me indifferent—had my zeal to rescue the child been less, or the farmer's fears for his own safety not more—in short, had there been a single link of the chain wanting, which connected in one all these circumstances, a chasm would have been made to prevent all that followed. But when the coincidence of things thus met and followed each other, in regular order, it is really astonishing to look back and trace from what slender and apparently trifling beginnings great events arise. The selling Joseph for a slave by his brethren, laid the foundation of his future grandeur, and his family's deliverance from famine. The want of sleep in the Persian king, brought about the revolution of the whole empire. And, comparing small things with great, in the history of Mary Giles, a change of situation, induced by apparently a small cause, eventually led to as wonderful a revolution (at least as far as concerned her it became so) as that of Joseph's government, or Ahasuerus's realm. It is among the highest duties of life to watch the ebbings and flowings of God's goodness in the tide of our own history. And as it forms an evident duty, so it cannot fail to produce very great delight. And what can be productive of greater pleasure to a soul enlightened by grace, than to behold all the way along, as the Lord hath been guiding our own little bark through the pathless track

of this world's waters, though we have been toiling at the oars, or furling and unfurling the sail, as our poor judgment thought best, to guide to the port we had in view; his love and wisdom have been all the while directing to a very different end, to his praise and our happiness, in bringing us to the haven where we would be. Every one in grace that converses with his own history in this manner, will be brought to the same conclusion as the psalmist: "Oh! that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men."

I entered upon my new charge with prayer, and (as the reader will discover, as he follows her history) I found cause very frequently as I went along in the prosecution of my duty towards this poor child, to give praise. Mary's reading had sadly gone back, from the time she had left the Sunday-school, in the service of her late master. A total neglect on his part had nearly made her forget all. Indeed, the ungodly man could not be supposed to have respect to other's duties, who never regarded his own. Seldom attending the house of God himself, little could be expected from his household. Oh! what an awful account have such unfeeling masters and parents of families to answer for, who, in a land of bibles, regard no more the souls of their little ones and servants, neither their own souls also, than the brutes which perish.

My first object in the trainment of Mary Giles, was to brighten up the rust of her reading. And this indeed I soon accomplished; for, as every one of my family felt interested for the poor child, and helped in the service of instruction at all proper intervals, it was not long before we found the fruits of our labour on this ground. And the reader will, I know, be pleased when I tell him, that our scholar not only possessed a good capacity for learning, much beyond the general standard of such characters, but what was, if possible,

still more gratifying, she took pleasure in being taught. Indeed, I soon discovered several features of character in this poor man's child, which would have become truly ornamental in the rich. Mary possessed a very feeling and affectionate heart. The roughness of her master's temper must have been more sensibly felt on this account. Violent storms are ill suited to the frail texture of tender plants.

I pause here, in the very opening of that part of Mary's history which commenced with my government, to remark, now several years have brought forward the proof in confirmation of it, that I then remember to have felt, from certain little incidents that occurred, strong presentiments that I should enjoy much pleasure in my apprentice. There was somewhat so striking in the providence by which she fell to my lot, that I predicted good in the issue. I like those events which carry with them a direction, as the cover of a letter, and speak in answer to the inquiry, as in the case of Jehu, "To which of all of us is this message? to thee, O captain!" If my reader be accustomed to mark the tendencies of the divine government as they pass and repass before him, in the circumstances of his own life, or in the events which fall under his eye in the world around him, he will enter into a full apprehension of what I mean. The patriarch Joseph was well versed in this divine science, so little understood, and less studied as it is by the world; or else he never would have made that pious and pardonable conclusion to all the cruelties he had experienced from his brethren; "Be not grieved," said he to them, when discovering to them who he was; "be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither but God." Blessed Lord Jesus! how many sweetenings in the cup

of life should I have lost the taste of, hadst thou not taught me to eye thy gracious hand, when the cup of sorrow hath been administered; and when "drinking of the brook in the way!" And, by the way, I shall not offend the reader, I hope, in suggesting to him the usefulness of always looking beyond second causes, to the first and predisposing. Surely it is blessed, when we can penetrate through the cloud, and, with the prophet, see one like the Son of Man, guiding, directing, ordering, and regulating the whole!

The soul of a believer then finds support and resignation under the most trembling providence, and is enabled to say with that tried man of old, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."

While Mary was attending to her reading, I took care that she should no less be brought up in habits of labour and industry. So highly important an office is it, in the circumstances of our poor, to begin betimes to be inured to the situation in which the Lord in his providence hath placed them, that it is not possible for habits of industry to be too early formed. Methinks I would have every poor man introduce his children to the love of employment from their very infancy. Though the child be incapable to *get* any thing by his labour, yet I would endeavour to make him *in love* with it. For which purpose, as soon as they were able to run alone, I would accustom them to be thus exercised: they should, at command, carry some little article from one part of the room to another, as they were directed; and be taught that their food and raiment were given them as the reward of their labour. Such a plan would induce habits of industry, and insensibly incline their minds to be in love with the way of life in which their future destination seemed to have been directed by the Lord. And in this sense, as well as in a higher, the maxim of the wise man would be found good—"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old

he will not depart from it." And if it was not for enlarging the subject too far, I should add, that to the want of the early inculcating in the minds of the children of the poor these habits of usefulness, it is that so many idle apprentices are found in the advanced years of their life. From never having been accustomed to do any thing while at home with their parents, when they are put abroad, and called upon to work, every thing becomes a burden; the master is considered a tyrant, and the child insensibly learns to look upon him instead of a friend, as an enemy; and thus from the very onset, the poor boy or girl, unconscious of it, contracts an aversion to the person who ought to be regarded as their best friend; and all this because, never having been accustomed to work, the mind enters upon it with reluctancy, and the habit is formed another way. Whereas, if our poor children learned betimes to blend industry with religion, and if that industry was contracted and incorporated in their very nature from their cradle, every employment would become a pleasure; and it would be found, in all the after stages of life, that he who worked for his bread, worked for his health, his amusement, his comfort, his happiness; and by being useful in his day and generation, filled up an honourable station in the community to which he belonged, and be found humble towards God, and profitable to man.

It was among the first of my principles of government, to let our little Mary understand that she came not to live with me to be idle. Indeed, she found in my house an active family, and as one coal kindles another, the flame of industry soon kindled in Mary's mind also. It was really pleasant to observe, with what diligence the poor child endeavoured to show her affection for the kindness she had found. She fully proved the doctrine I have maintained, that it must be a base heart indeed which will remain always unmoved

by acts of generosity. Though, from the corruption of our nature, it is well that there are methods of appealing to other passions beside that of love, yet I have seldom found cause to regret in the end, for having made use of the milder means of persuasion.

It would form a long history to relate, if I were to follow up the whole of Mary Giles's, from the day I first brought her to my house to the present hour. Several years have now gone over both her head and mine, and neither have found cause to regret our coming together. Sure I am, the providence was of the Lord; and his providences to his people are all gracious. The same eye which beheld Moses in the water, both looked on, and watched over poor little insignificant Mary Giles. And though the after events of this child's life were not so splendid nor important as those of the man of God in Egypt, yet, as a child of God, (which I trust and persuade myself Mary Giles is) her temporal and eternal welfare formed as interesting a part in the one great scale of his care over his church and people, to whom the whole belongs, as the highest and the best. To him belongs the province, that "not one of his little ones should perish."

I have already told the reader, how much I was struck with Mary's figure and appearance, amidst all the disadvantages in which she stood, when first discovered in the furze brake. Cleanliness hath not a little contributed since to throw more of that innate beauty into Mary's person. Every one that looks at Mary, will feel prepossessed in her favour; for the artless innocency of her countenance cannot fail to win their affection. I am looking forward, I confess, with very encouraging hopes, that in the humble walk of life where Mary's path is cast, the same Lord which watched over her for good, will arrange all that is to follow; and though in my present advanced years I may not live to see it, yet sure I am, wherever or how-

ever she may be placed, she will find the same issue as he did, who said, "Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

I cannot fold up or close poor Mary Giles's history, without one observation more arising out of it; and that is, just to remark how amply I find myself rewarded for the part I bore in this child's rescue from her unfeeling master. I not only have the consolation which arises out of this view of the subject, but I have literally and truly a remuneration of another kind. Mary's services in numberless little errands and employments, in which she ministers to my comfort, are not among the greatest of her usefulness. She is enabled to serve me in yet more important concerns. She reads to me the word of God. She soothes me in sickness, in the refreshment I find from hearing her go through the bible, and the promises, and with a voice and manner as convinceth me that she feels what she reads, and hath a personal enjoyment in the blessings it contains. In short, every act in the life and conversation of Mary, carries with it testimony that she is a child of God. And when I connect this with her history, I feel thankfulness to the Lord, for having been directed to be the instrument of her deliverance, and enjoy all the sweetness of the observation of that scripture, which saith, "He that watereth shall be watered also himself."

## XLIII.

THE REFLECTIONS ON THE INCIDENT OF THE STABLE BOY, MENTIONED IN THE ZION'S PILGRIM.

We were returned to the inn, and while my friend left me to discharge the expenses which we had incurred there, he visited, as his manner was, the stables, in order to drop a word on the best things among that class of people who inhabit those places, and who are not in the way of hearing it elsewhere.

He used to say, that, in his opinion, no order of beings whatever stood in a situation more pitiable. Formed as their society is for the most part of the children of the poor, they are introduced from their earliest days into this path of life, without the smallest education, or the least idea of its usefulness; and as they advance in years, though advancing at the same time in all the language and corrupted manners of the stable, they remain totally destitute of any apprehension of divine truths. Perhaps without a breach of charity it may be said, that very few of the whole body of this order, whether considered as postilions, chaise-drivers, stage-coachmen, or ostlers, have any more consciousness of the things which accompany salvation, than the cattle with whom they herd.

What a vast number of such characters (could the imagination form the group) do the various inns of the kingdom contain? and what a mass of corrupt communication is perpetually produced in their daily intercourse with one another, without a single sentiment flowing from the lips of any to "the use of edifying," so as "to minister grace unto the hearers!" and what tends to make the evil greater, as if the contagion of the stable in the corruption of manners, had not sufficient scope for exercise during the six days' labour of

the week, there is no remission to this unhappy class of beings on the Lord's day. The morning bell of the church, which kindly calls all ranks without discrimination to the house of prayer, calls in vain to them. Unaccustomed to any means of grace, and unacquainted with either the morning prayer, or the evening worship, they who among them find no immediate employment, lounge their time in the stable; while by far the greater part are engaged as drivers of stages, and diligences, and chaises, to conduct in defiance of all laws human and divine, a set of sabbath breakers like themselves, in their several journies of business and journies of pleasure. The number which the various inns of the kingdom pour forth upon these occasions every Lord's day is incalculable.

How frequently hath it excited my commiseration, when, in some sweet morning of the sabbath, the diligence hath passed the street under my window. 'Alas!' I have said, 'what a wretched way of life must that be, which loses the very distinction of days by such an uninterrupted labour! Surely, except in form, there can be no difference of character between the driver and the horses, when both are trained to expect the going over the same tract of ground in their daily labour!' How irresistibly hath my heart sometimes when pursuing the reflection, been impelled to admire, and in that admiration to adore the distinguishing grace of God!—"Who maketh thee to differ from another?" is a sweet morsel for the gracious soul to feed on whenever such occasions of reflection occur. I have felt the full force of it many times on the Lord's day; particularly when in the same moment in which I have beholden a party of pleasure-pursuing creatures driving through the streets on their various excursions, in order to consume this blessed day in idleness and dissipation, I have seen some gracious souls gladly hastening to the house of God, to adore his goodness, to hear his word,

and to implore the effusion of the Spirit on churches, and on the ministers and people on this sacred day of rest.

[The reader will pardon this digression, I hope, induced by the impulse of the moment.]

My friend, as was before observed, had left me at the inn, in order to visit those regions of ignorance and sin which the stable furnisheth. And never, surely, was a mission to the most darkened nations of any country more needed, than to such British heathens of our own!

My friend possessed every requisite for the office. Added to a natural gentleness of manners and a softness of deportment, he had acquired the most winning art of persuasion.

He knew how to adapt his discourse in the least offensive method, so as to arrest the attention of his hearers. And although few, perhaps, were ever better formed to shine in the circle of the great and learned, yet he had imbibed the full spirit of the apostle's lesson, and knew how "to condescend to men of low estate."

His first endeavour was to find out some leading trait of character in the poor uninformed mind of the person he addressed; his next object was to suit his discourse in correspondence to this apprehension; and in cases where but little opportunity offered of a personal conversation, if providentially any of the profession had acquired any knowledge of letters, he had the pleasing art of prevailing upon them to accept of one or more of the pious little tracts, which are now so generally circulated, and which he always carried about with him in his pocket for this purpose.

It so happened that a poor boy who acted as subordinate to the ostler in the stable, and indeed as a general underling to all the menial servants of the inn, was engaged in rubbing down one of the horses in the

stall when my friend entered the stable. The gentleness and condescension with which my friend bid him 'good morrow,' so very dissimilar to the surly language which he in general received from his companions, soon called up his attention; and as my friend entered farther into conversation with him, first on subjects pertaining to his office, and then by an easy transition, and by a manner peculiarly his own, on matters of an higher nature, the poor lad's heart like that of Lydia mentioned in scripture, was open to attend to the things spoken.

The subject (as I afterwards learnt) to which my friend adverted, was the happiness of "that rest which remaineth for the people of God," in the upper and brighter world; contrasted with the toilsome and unsatisfying nature of all things here below. And when he came to describe the love of the Lord Jesus in purchasing this rest for his people, and his affectionate desires that the poor and weary, and the heavy laden, should come to him and partake of it, the poor youth, unable to contain his emotions, melted into tears. He did not in so many words say what he felt, but his eyes expressed it. My friend, who possessed great quickness of penetration, perceiving the effect, without seeming to notice it, then made his discourse somewhat more personal; and held forth the pleasing consideration to his view, that this love of the Lord Jesus was intended for him. The poor boy wiped away the tear which had fallen on his cheek, and drew nearer to my friend, as to one whose kindness had begotten confidence and affection; and manifested that kind of sympathy of soul which seemed to thank him for what he had said, and to request him to say more.

[*Thus far from Zion's Pilgrim.*]

It might perhaps be gratifying to the reader, were I to follow on the subject of this poor boy's history, and

to relate the sequel of it; but this is not my intention. It will be sufficient for all the purposes I design from it, just to observe, that from those first impressions of grace wrought on the youth's mind by the instrumentality of my friend's speaking to him, a new train of thoughts opened to his view; and in consequence thereof, a new line of conduct took place in his life—and from hence it will follow, that there are minds among the humblest and lowest classes of society, and in places where one might be least supposed to find them, who are susceptible of the most gracious impressions. Moreover, as appears in the instance of this boy, the most trifling means become sufficient when God is pleased to commission them to the accomplishing this purpose. And therefore it will follow, that it must form one of the most important duties, and I might add, it certainly becomes one of the noblest of all charities, even charity to the souls of our fellow creatures, when, by any act of this nature, we are enabled to search and seek out (as scripture beautifully expresses it) "the sheep of Christ, where they are scattered in the dark and cloudy day."

My christian reader, (for I venture to persuade myself that this little tract will come into the hands of some one of this discription) shall I suppose that you have ever had occasion to visit an inn?

And shall I ask you whether you have ever noticed, and with a proper christian affection, the very awful state in which the several inhabitants of it, not only of the stable, but of the whole house, live, and in which, it is to be feared, they often die? When you enter an habitation of this kind, whether it be one of the highest order in the elegant hotel, or among the smaller inns or taverns, and behold as is sometimes the case in every department of it, as you pass from room to room, the revellings, banquettings, and abominable excesses from the court-yard to the stable, and from the dining

room to the bar; in every part, your eyes, your ears, and every faculty capable of discernment are made witnesses of sin and iniquity; might not a reflecting mind and without a breach of charity, be prompted to say, surely the great enemy of souls reigns here? To enumerate the thousandth part of what is daily going on in the numberless hotels, inns, alehouses, and taverns, of the kingdom, where sin, in all its multiform shapes is penetrating, is impossible. But conceive what a mass of the most horrid transactions of iniquity would it form, were the imagination capable to take the aggregate of wickedness in those haunts of uncleanness, even for a single day and night!

And hath it never struck you, even in the transient contemplation of those things, how interesting a part of christian charity it must be, to attempt at least some little reformation, if it be possible, (and all things are possible with God's blessing) in the way of advice, or reproof, or entreaty? For my own part, I confess, the thought hath frequently crossed my mind, and wounded as it passed, when upon any of those occasions, after having called at such houses to take a necessary refreshment in a journey, and when departing from them again; and when, perhaps, the host hath followed me to the door, attended by his servants, to bow and to thank me for my favours,—alas! I have said to myself, how little am I entitled to thanks, when I have been rather contributing to support these poor mistaken creatures in what must ultimately end in misery, than dropping a seasonable word of advice, which under grace, might help to bring them out of it! I have neglected the only opportunity, perhaps, which ever may be afforded me, of saying a word for God, and for the souls of those people; but I leave them just as I found them, unawakened, unconcerned, uninterested, to all the important purposes of existence; and it is probable

I may see them no more until we meet "before the judgment seat of Christ."

And are there not many methods by which, under a divine blessing, we might reasonably hope to accomplish a change, like that on the mind of the poor stable boy, in the habits and manners of the several characters which make up an inn? Surely, it is not the natural and unavoidable consequences of the place itself, that iniquity must abound in it; for if it were so, the very way of life would be unlawful. But so far is this from being the case, that under proper regulations, inns are calculated for the kindest offices of hospitality. Very sweet indeed is it to behold them at any time after a long and wearisome journey. Very admirably are they formed on the road, for the accommodation both of man and beast. And perhaps, nothing becomes more striking as an emblem to the tired and fatigued traveller, of that "rest which remaineth for the people of God;" when, after traversing over many a long, and rugged, and intricate road, and, amidst darkness and danger, like the christian pilgrim approaching the end of his journey, the wayfaring man beholds the door of the inn, and entering, finds every thing his wants require.

But the best intentioned things may be perverted, and that which, if properly used, becomes productive of great good, by its abuse becomes evil. And in nothing more is this manifested, than in the case of inns; for while resorted to for the refreshment of the traveller in his journey, or for the settling of affairs among men of business in the town, nothing can be better formed for the general good, especially under the management of honest and good men, of which there are some happy instances. But when they are made the haunts of drunkenness and dissipation; while inns, alehouses, and taverns open their thousand doors to clubs

of sots over their midnight bowls; and perhaps there are but few public-houses in the kingdom, more or less, but what have their stated visitors night by night, who regularly occupy the same seat, and as regularly go through the same round of folly, and for the most part amidst the same circle: where, as the poet expresses it, 'they call and storm, and drink and swear, and make flat war with God!' Here the filthy conversation of such societies forms an atmosphere too polluted for a christian to breathe in; and of such nests it may be spiritually said, as was literally the case of the adorable Redeemer when upon earth, "there was no room for him in the inn," so here can be no suitable accommodation for his people now.

Doth the christian traveller whose necessities compel him sometimes to visit an inn, and who thereby may find opportunity of being useful to the untaught and ungodly inhabitants of the several parts of it, doth he ask how he may best promote his Redeemer's glory and his fellow-creatures' happiness in any of those occurrences? The answer is direct:—seek out the opportunity of serious and religious conversation with the several characters you meet with in it. Many are the circumstances which are continually presenting themselves for this purpose at an inn, of saying or doing somewhat which, under grace, may be productive of the highest good: Solomon says, "a word spoken in due season, how good is it!" And sometimes it hath been known that a word only, nay a look, a frown, hath done more to give a new tide to the current of the affections, than a whole volume purposely written on the subject.

And in the instances where the christian traveller, for want of better accommodations, hath been compelled to sit down with others at the refreshment of a common table, or an ordinary, and where the conversation

hath been corrupt and sinful, yet, even here, a visible and decided mark of disapprobation, by suddenly rising up and leaving such company, hath done more in silencing profaneness, and putting impudence to the blush, than the most pointed discourse.

But all men have not gifts equally adapted to the purposes of reproof; and perhaps an injudicious and ill-timed administration of it may tend rather to irritate than reform. It must be left, therefore, to a man's own discretion in a multitude of instances, how to act upon the occasion.

I venture, however, to suggest to every truly serious and devout mind, whose occasional calls at an inn cannot but lead him to see, and consequently to lament, the accumulated mass of evil existing there; I venture to suggest one happy method, under a divine blessing, by way of counteracting its baleful effects, and that is, by adopting the plan of my friend, as in the instance of the poor stable boy. Personal conversation in a mild, gentle, persuasive manner, and where, by only pointing out evils, you leave the person you address to draw his own reflections therefrom, hath a very happy and conciliating effect. And where neither time nor opportunity furnish convenience for personal conversation, I would recommend the christian traveller to put into the hands of the different characters who live at an inn, or leave them on the table, or in the window, one or more of those most interesting tracts which are now in such general circulation. This may be blessed when both the writer and the giver are in their graves. This is what Solomon calls "bread cast upon the waters, found after many days."

And if my christian reader, to these plans, can find in his heart confidence enough in the best of causes to add another, and either drop a word to the master of the inn, or, if he stays to sleep at night, to invite him,

and as many of his household as can be spared to join him in prayer; such events, in prayerless families, have been known to produce very happy consequences.

But if, after all, your endeavours are unproductive of forming, under God, any real change of the mind and manners of the several characters of an inn, one blessing you will have, at least, as the result of your services: "God will not forget your work and labour of love." Neither will it be among the smallest consolations of a dying hour, that by so doing, your own soul is free from your brother's blood, when, having seen his danger, you gave him warning.

But while I say thus much to the christian reader in general, by way of calling up his attention to a subject so abundantly interesting, what a particular appeal doth the whole make to the masters of inns?

My friend, (should God, in his providence, bring these lines under the eye of one of this character) for Christ's sake consider, before it be too late, the awful perilous situation of a prayerless sinful household!

1st. Consider it as it concerns yourself. Have you never once calculated the false arithmetic of that man who is wise for a moment, and regardless of eternity? Let your gains be ever so great, (and on the supposition they are small, the imagination cannot form the picture of a greater fool than the man who, like Esau, sells his inheritance for a mess of pottage;) yet, "what is a man profited, if he were to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" And if all this racket, noise, and bustle, in which you live, to say nothing of the transgressions abounding round you, be only to live, and there be provision made how to die; if it leaves you no time for eternity, prevents every suitable preparation for it, nay, takes away even the heart from being disposed to it,—what is the whole of such a life now but vanity, and what can the end be but sorrow and vexation of spirit?

2nd. Consider it also as it concerns your household. Is it nothing in your esteem that so many precious and immortal souls live under your roof, are hired in your service, and yet live to no end or purpose, but, like the brutes that perish, are employed from day to day, as if to fill up the measure of their existence? Do you really design to say by your evident conduct towards them and yourself, as it concerns divine things, that 'it is very true God hath revealed his will to mankind, and fully shewn that he is to be loved and obeyed rather than man; but I wish to banish the recollection of such things from my house: I will have no bible read here; I will have no family prayer observed within these walls; but every thing shall testify that the God in whose hands our breath is, and whose are all our ways, we will not glorify?' If this be not the language of the lips, is it not of the heart? And while for the pitiful consideration of this world's gain, your servants and your cattle know no distinction of days, but you deny the very brute which lives but to serve you, the rest of the sabbath which his Maker hath commanded for him,—doth it not seem as if you held Omnipotence at defiance, and dared him to do his worst? Is it possible that you can be so lost to all the awful objects of eternity, as not merely to neglect your own salvation, but to implicate yourself in the guilt of others? Surely, a moment's compassion to their eternal welfare might prompt any but the most hardened heart to say, if I must at length make my bed in everlasting misery, let me not drag after me the souls of my poor servants, my children, and my friends!

3rd. Consider it also as it concerns the company you entertain. If the master of any of those houses were seriously to lay it to heart, what numberless instances of sin he is permitting under his roof,—what scenes the walls of his rooms are nightly witness to, and at which they would blush if they were capable; what

multitudes in one short year, come in as men and ramble out as brutes; if the mind be not inaccessible to all impressions, it cannot need conviction that such a life must be "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

But from the master of an inn, let me turn to the servants of it of every description and character. If this little book should fall in the way of one of those, may the Lord bless it to the understanding! Think, my poor friend, before it be too late, on the nature and value of your immortal soul! and let nothing tempt you to follow with such eagerness the concerns of this world, which allows you no time for providing for those which are to come. Your way of life, however lawful in itself, ceases to be safe, if it leaves you no opportunity for being wise unto salvation. And do not forget, though you cannot find time to live, you must find time to die: and be assured of this, that if living men knew what dying men feel, no one thing upon earth would be sufficient to keep them from the care of the soul. "Oh that men were wise, that they understood this: that they would consider their latter end!"

## XLIV.

SUITABLE REFLECTIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SEED OF ABRAHAM, ON THE SUBJECT OF THEIR RETURN TO GOD: BEING ADDITIONAL REMARKS APPENDED TO THE HISTORY OF THE CONVERTED JEW, AS RELATED IN THE ZION'S PILGRIM.

As the foregoing relation brings with it every evidence that can be necessary in proof of its authenticity, I have been led to hope, that the perusal of it by any of our elder brethren the Jews, if accompanied by the divine blessing, might prompt them to pause over the recollection of the present state of their church, and seriously consider how very different it is, and long hath been, compared with their ancient privileges and enjoyments. And if a momentary reflection only should lead them to the further thought of those precious promises of the God of Israel, that "he who scattered Israel will gather him;" perhaps the solemn meditation might be blessed of God to the best of purposes, and if but in a single instance it should be rendered instrumental in the Lord's hand, it would be a mercy twice blessed, both to him that writes, and to him that reads; and above all the God of Israel would be glorified, whose praise is the first and ultimate object of all his dispensations.

Under this idea I venture to call the attention of our elder brethren in the church, to the consideration of those few leading points in which his present and everlasting welfare are highly interested.

Studiously avoiding all controverted doctrines, which keep up the present schism in the Jewish and Gentile church, I shall confine myself to those grand and fundamental truths in which both are agreed.

1. And here, the first thing to which I would request your serious attention, is that pointed prophecy of your

great ancestor Jacob. You admit with us, that in his dying moments, under the spirit of inspiration, he declared, that "the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until the Shiloh should come, and unto him should the gathering of the people be."

Now you are ready to allow with us, that the sceptre of kingly authority did actually take place in the tribe of Judah, in the person of David; and continued for a long succession of years. For even in Babylon, during the period of your nation's captivity, though the ensigns of government were in a great measure obscured and tarnished, yet there were the vestiges of some authority still remaining. There were governors among the heads of families, and which were permitted to enjoy the peculiarities of their laws, as appears from their history. And this authority was again revived with more splendour after the return of the people from Babylon. And this exercise of authority, continued with more or less magnificence unto the time when Judea became a province under the Roman power. During which period all parties are agreed, for history clearly proves the fact, the Jews enjoyed their laws, though under tribute to the Roman power. Hence, under Pilate, the governor of Judea, the Sanhedrim upon a remarkable occasion pleaded their privilege in the case of the trial of Jesus; "We have a law, (said they) and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

And while you admit this fact, you must equally allow another. Though the regal power, or even if you will call it so, the shadow of it, as it might well be termed, during and after the Babylonish captivity, still remained from David to the days of Pilate; yet from that period you have lost even the vestige of kingly government. The nation did indeed then with one voice declare, that they had no king but Cæsar. And

the circumstances of your nation very loudly proclaimed the same. Every candid Jew upon earth that is acquainted with the history of his own people, must confess, that from the days of the Roman empire, when Titus Vespasian sacked Jerusalem, the whole nation of the Jews have been without government, without king, and living in the midst of other people, without the advantage of any national establishment of their own. And it requires nothing but candour to allow, that what your prophet Hosea said should take place, is, and hath been ever since literally fulfilled. "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." Hosea iii. 4. Hence, therefore, you must allow, that the sceptre is departed from Judah, and a lawgiver from between his feet. Whether the latter part of Jacob's prophecy be fulfilled in the Shiloh being come or not, these points are certain. You have no civil government of your own. You have no lawgiver, no sceptre, no prince to go in and out before you. You have no sacrifice, no altar on which to offer sacrifice. None of the five signs of the temple. No image or pillar of commemoration. No ephod, or teraphim; neither urim or thummim.

2. From this unquestionable truth, I desire the descendant of Abraham to go on to the consideration of another. All your prophets with one voice declare, that there is a period to come, when your nation shall more than be restored to your ancient splendour. And the conviction of this blessed promise is, that both Jew and Gentile are resting in the full assurance thereof. To bring before you all that the prophets have said on this point, would be little less than an abbreviation of the whole sum and substance of prophecy. Hosea, one of the most ancient of your prophets, and who predicted the deprivation of your civil and religious government;

in allusion to this great event hath those remarkable words, " Afterwards shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days," Hosea iii. 5. And Isaiah echoing to the same language declares, that " In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." And in the event of these glorious things, this same prophet declares, that " In that day, the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hameth, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth," Isa. ii. 2. and xi. 11, 12. I think it would be a superfluous service, to quote to the learned and serious Jew, who is, it may reasonably be supposed, conversant with the writings of the prophets, any further passages in proof of this grand truth. Every one of the seed and stock of Israel will allow with me, that in consequence of the general promises of God, by the prophets, the Jew is looking out for a period in which there shall be the return of his nation to their own land, from all the quarters of the earth, that they shall be restored to their ancient enjoyments of church government and national splendour; that they shall enjoy a more eminent presence of God; and that there will be a greater manifestation of the outpouring of his Spirit. Admitting these glorious truths, which no candid Jew who is well informed in his own scriptures will I believe doubt, I venture to put down this as a second point in which both Jew and Gentile heartily agree.

3. From hence I would call upon the descendant of

Abraham to go on to the serious consideration of a third point, in which it surely becomes him to be very earnest and diligent in the inquiry; and that is, whether from the language of these same prophets, which have not only predicted the accomplishment of those unspeakable mercies, but have been commissioned of the Lord to state the time for their accomplishment; any calculation whatever can be made so as to favour the smallest hope that the period for the fulfilment of some of them is not past, and for the completion of others is not at hand. This point I humbly conceive to be so highly interesting and important, that I am persuaded no serious Jew, who is at all awakened to a proper sense and apprehension of his own everlasting welfare, can be indifferent concerning it.

You will perceive, that in all this address I have not once brought forward, and much less insisted upon, any of our arguments and evidences as christians, that the Shiloh is come, and that many of your prophecies are fulfilled. I have studiously avoided these points, in order to keep in the back ground all ideas of controversy. What I would now simply entreat the serious descendant of the stock of Israel to attend to is, the consideration of the important subject, as it may be gathered from his own scriptures. And I am persuaded, under divine teaching, if my elder brother the Jew, will but solemnly and seriously pause over the two points I have brought before him, and will then turn to the prophets, and particularly Daniel, and make his own calculation in any way or manner he pleases, (for it will explain itself every way) of the time there predicted when these great events should be accomplished, he will be led to the conviction, that *some* of the leading points of prophecy concerning his nation have been fulfilled, *some* are now fulfilling, and the period is nearly arrived when the *whole* must be accomplished.

Without amplifying arguments, or going into the

subject beyond the limits of a small tract like this, I only for the present wish to call his attention to the close of Daniel's prophecy, where we find those very striking words. "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days," Dan. xii. 11, 12. Now, premising only that days in the prophetic language means years, (see Ezek. iv. 6.) let the candid Jew make his calculation by any system whatever of his own he shall think fit) I would not request him to do it by our's) he must be compelled to acknowledge, that the period is nearly run out, and the forty-five years to the bringing forward the blessed state that is to succeed it, cannot be far remote.

Certain it is, there are great mercies the Lord God of Israel hath in store for Israel in the latter days. Equally certain also it is, that as a nation they have been long, very long under heavy marks of displeasure. And as there never was a period in their history since the Lord formed them as a people, in which they remained so very long, by many, many centuries, as they have now done, unvisited either by prophet or revelation, surely it would be the wisdom of the Jew to ask counsel of God, the cause of their long desolation and the Lord's displeasure.

Should any teachable mind among that class of people, be prompted to this most interesting inquiry; and should it be the felicity of such an one under the divine teaching to discover that the Shiloh is indeed come; and yet more than all, should that glorious Shiloh fulfil in such an instance that precious part of the prophecy, in gathering him unto himself among his people; then what a flood of joy would pour in upon the mind, and how would all the other blessed prophecies relating to

this one great event appear accomplished to his view. May the Lord in his own time and manner do this; for to him alone the province is to accomplish it! All hearts must join in the fervent wish, that according to Isaiah's prophecy, "the Redeemer may come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob." And when by the happy junction of both Jew and Gentile, the precious promise of the Lord by Malachi may be happily fulfilled: "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, the name of the Lord shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto the Lord's name, and a pure offering."

## XLV.

THE REPENTANCE, CONVERSION, AND DYING EXPERIENCE OF A POOR PROSTITUTE,* COMMUNICATED IN A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

You have so repeatedly requested that I would transmit to you in writing, the very remarkable case of a poor penitent, whose last moments I attended in my parochial capacity; and you have expressed your wishes so strongly, that the history of her wonderful conversion through grace, might be made more generally known, through the medium of that admirable publication, the Evangelical Magazine, for the comfort of the Lord's people in general, and for the encouragement of sinners in particular, that I cannot resist your importunity. Indeed, as I am led to believe, that the memoirs of such characters, have a very happy effect, through God's blessing, to lift up the hands that hang down, and to support the feeble knees, and the extraordinary conversions of notorious sinners, which now and then occur, should seem to be intended by the divine goodness to this end, I am as much prompted from principles of duty, as from inclination, to gratify your wishes in this particular; hoping that the great Disposer of all events may so graciously direct the publication of it to good, in causing the influence of his Holy Spirit to accompany it, that it may terminate to his glory, in awakening others to repentance, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I am verily persuaded, few instances have occurred within these latter ages, which more strikingly have

* This was afterwards published as a tract, and entitled, 'The history of a Magdalene.'

illustrated the goodness of God, and the sovereignty of his grace, than that of the person whose conversion it was my peculiar happiness to be an eye witness of the circumstances of which I am going to relate. And as the apostle Paul (acting as the amanuensis to the Holy Ghost) was commissioned to declare, "that it was for this cause he obtained mercy, that in him first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting;" may we not hope that this and every other renewed instance of his long-suffering and patience, are intended as so many patterns of mercy to a sinful and unbelieving world, calling upon transgressors to return, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, that their souls may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

From motives of tenderness and delicacy to her surviving relations, I am not permitted to mention her name, neither indeed can this be at all material to the object in view; it will be sufficient to all the purposes intended from the relation of her history to observe, in the outlines of it, that she was one of those unhappy and ever-to-be deplored characters, who live by prostitution. At a very early period, having been seduced from the path of chastity, and the fence of female modesty being once removed, she gave herself up to work all uncleanness with greediness; and from the age of seventeen to within a few months preceding her death, which happened in her thirty-second year, she had lived in a state of the most abandoned profligacy.

When I was first called to visit her, I found her in the last stage of an atrophy and consumption, most probably induced from the effects of her intemperance and debauchery. The poor creature had, it seens, long struggled, amidst the conflicts of various passions of shame, and fear, and distrust, mingled with the most earnest desires to find some means of grace before she could summons sufficient fortitude to send for a minister

to that purpose. But in proportion as her illness increased, the burden of sin became more and more intolerable, the distresses and agonies of her mind pressing harder upon her, the approach of death, judgment, and eternity opening in full prospect before her, and swelling in magnitude and awfulness at every renewed view; and, above all, no doubt, the blessed Spirit of a compassionate God operated by his gracious influence to lead her heart to repentance. These awakening causes triumphed over every other consideration, and, in earnestness hardly to be described, she desired I might be sent for. It seems that I was particularly chosen to this office, from a circumstance which had taken place a few months before. I had, at that time, been engaged in my duty of visiting the sick, in attending the last moments of a man who kept a house of ill fame, with whom at that season this woman lived; and (as she afterwards informed me) she had then contrived to render my visits to him profitable to herself. For though, at that period, she was actually engaged in the very career of all her sinful courses, and lived in his house for the purpose of prostitution, yet she always watched the moment of my approach, and hastening from her loose companions, she would hide herself in a room adjoining to the sick man's, where from the thinness of the partition, favoured the opportunity of hearing all that passed, unperceived, and, with floods of tears, and in the most poignant agony of mind, would pour forth her soul in prayer to God.

The scene which presented itself before me at my first interview with this poor Magdalene, was, I think, the most powerful arrest upon my feelings I ever experienced; it baffles all the powers of my pen to describe. Pourtray to your imagination, my dear Sir, a dying woman, with just life enough to speak, under the impression of the quickest sensibility her sinking frame could sustain, confessing, with every aggravating circumstance she

could recollect, the iniquity of her life, awed by no consideration of fear or shame to conceal or keep back the whole truth, seeking no palliation, studying not to extenuate, or throw a covering over transgressions which she had committed, but very evidently feeling in the heart what she openly proclaimed with the mouth, that she was the chiefest of sinners.

Your mind may probably furnish you with suitable images, so as to give you some idea of what this affecting scene afforded; but to describe it as it really was, is impossible. Never shall I forget the manner with which she addressed herself to me, after she had gone through the melancholy tale of her life. Methinks her form is now before me. With a look of the most exquisite distress, at once expressive of hope and fear, and a thousand anxieties, she directed her dying eyes toward me, and said, 'Can there, Sir, do you think, be any mercy for such a wretch as I am?' You may readily suppose what answer I gave to this most interesting question, and how eagerly I sought, by a faithful representation of the truth as it is in Jesus, to pour balm into her distracted mind. With a number of quotations from the gospel, which represent Jesus as the Saviour and the Friend of sinners, and of the express purpose for which he came, "not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance," I endeavoured to smooth and comfort her spirits; and I could perceive a gleam of hope brightening up her saddened countenance as I dispensed to her the divine cordial from the sacred promises. But how was my astonishment awakened, when proceeding from general promises or revealed truths, to make application to her particular case, by leading her into a brief view of the doctrine of the fall, and man's utterly lost state before God, with the design of the Redeemer in the scheme of salvation, she frequently anticipated my account, and gave me every now and then proofs that she was no stranger to the great

subjects of which I spoke. I could not help expressing my surprise how a person in her unhappy way of life should have been brought to the knowledge of these truths; and this opened a new source of grief in her mind, and brought many tears from her eyes. Her parents, she told me, had early taught her principles of piety, and no doubt, had seasoned their instructions with fervent prayers to God for his blessings upon them; but her sinful course of life had tempted them to fear all was fruitless, and they had left the world (for, as well as I can recollect, they had both been dead some years) lamenting the inefficacy of their supplications to God for their graceless child.

How ought the sequel of this sinner's history to teach parents to pray without fainting, and never to restrain prayer before God! How many prayers offered up by serious and regenerated believers for their ungodly children, have been answered years after the humble petitioners have been gathered to their fathers! And what examples are there now in heaven among the redeemed of the Lord, of the children of the faithful recovered through almighty grace, as brands from the fire, whose seemingly unpromising conduct suppressed every hope, and caused their parents to descend with sorrow to their graves.

The delight with which the poor woman listened to my relation of the Redeemer's love in the salvation of sinners, and his own most precious promise, that all who come to him he would in no wise cast out, the fervency with which she united with me in prayer, and the very great earnestness of her importunity when she begged of God that the blood of Christ might cleanse her from all sin, these were all very pleasing considerations to encourage me to hope that a spirit of grace was poured out upon her from the Lord. But what I would beg most particularly to mention, as more eminently calculated to give this assurance, that

her contrition was sincere, and the sorrow she expressed arose from his power in the heart, who was exalted as a Prince and Saviour for to give repentance and remission of sins, was the effect which manifested itself in her most abounding and ardent faith in the Redeemer's merits and atoning blood. That great Being, who had poured a spirit of grace and supplication into her heart, and led her to look on him whom she pierced, and mourn, and give her also to believe on him to everlasting life; for no sooner had I brought before her the evidences of the Redeemer's love to poor self-condemned sinners, and proved that to save all such was the great motive of his mission, than she was enabled to rejoice in the consolation, and to have a good hope through grace. And this you know, my dear Sir, could come from no other source than from the immediate teachings of the blessed Spirit. It is his peculiar gracious work.

If it would not be considered rather digressing from the immediate subject of this memoir, I would beg to throw in an observation upon this point, which probably, through the divine blessing, might be attended with beneficial consequences upon occasions of a similar nature, in enabling the friends of dying persons to form a more clear and accurate decision of the operations of the Holy Ghost. I have found in the course of my attendance upon the sick, a great variety of cases which required the closest examination before a right calculation could be framed upon this most interesting point.

I hope I shall be doing no unacceptable service, for the information of such as may desire every possible help upon occasions of this nature, to state the doctrine somewhat more clearly.

Convictions of sin, which are induced from the teachings of the blessed Spirit, have, it must be confessed, several distinguishing particularities to denote them

from the distress of mind which is the mere effect of a foreboding and alarmed conscience; and in nothing, perhaps, more strikingly than in this one instance.

He, who is under the stings of a guilty conscience only, and awakened with the prospect of death, will be saying and seeking for every thing he can, by way of extenuating his past misconduct; whereas, the soul under divine convictions, aims at no palliative, seeks no excuse, but feels, as the apostle did, the full truth of that declaration, "the chiefest of sinners." These essential distinctions between the operations of the spirit of grace in the heart, and the alarms of guilt only arising in the sinner's mind, will sometimes afford the opportunity of discerning that godly sorrow induced by the wisdom which is from above, and working repentance to salvation not to be repented of, from that sorrow of the world which cometh from the wisdom that is beneath, and working death.

But in that other operation of the blessed Spirit, which leads the convinced sinner on when mourning over a corrupt and lost nature, to behold the Lamb of God as an all-sufficient sacrifice, taking away the sins of this world—here we are furnished with more clear and decisive marks, and can more plainly trace the footsteps of his divine labour. For as no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost, wherever we discover certain and unequivocal testimonies of this kind, wherever we find a more steady, unalterable, and depending faith upon the merits and atonement of the Redeemer, as the sole means of justification before God, a penitence, accompanied with this principle, becomes a more certain evidence of the spirit of grace in the heart, and furnishes more pleasing assurances concerning the state of the soul; and all men that see it may say, this hath God done, for they may perceive that it is his work.

At this distance of time, (for it is now near ten

months since her death) I cannot recollect with that exactness and precision with which all relations of this solemn nature should be repeated, so as to give you in her own words, the very strong testimonies with which this penitent made profession of her faith, and her abiding dependence upon Christ for salvation; but it was astonishing to conceive to what extent, and with what power this long lost sinner was enabled to exercise an unshaken faith in the Redeemer. From my first interview with her to the time of her death, though an interval of about thirteen days, her testimony was invariable, steady, and unshaken; she seemed indeed, to have gone on in a progressive increase of joy in believing from the first hour she expressed her hopes of forgiveness.

The day of her death, finding her strength almost exhausted, and her speech so low as scarcely able to be understood, I questioned, with some degree of anxiety, whether her confidence in the Redeemer's merits was the same? and she seemed to reprove me for the apprehension, and gave me to understand that she waited for the glorious moment to begin the song of Moses and the Lamb; and as I found afterwards from those who were with her when the hour came, she departed under a full persuasion of happiness through the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I confess to you, my dear Sir, very freely, and without the smallest reserve, that, in all the course of my ministry, (and I have had no small exercise of this kind, in visiting the sick of large and populous parishes for near twenty years) I have never yet seen an instance at all approaching to it, for displaying the freedom and sovereignty of God's grace in the recovery of sinners. And when I contrast it with the proud, haughty, and supercilious character of those self-sufficient and self-righteous pharisees we meet with every day, I feel the force of our Saviour's sentence most

awfully fulfilled, " publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."

I have stated the circumstances of the case simply as they have appeared, and have only to lament that I did not make any written memorandums, in order to have drawn it more accurately, particularly of the poor woman's expressions; for some of them were wonderfully striking. I remember indeed among other things, she told me, that she had felt early convictions of her conduct, and which, more or less, accompanied her through the whole of her sinful life. 'Many, many times, Sir,' said she, 'have I drowned myself in drunkenness to drive away reflection, and to deaden some thing which seemed to call me to repent.'

Is not this indeed a brand plucked from the fire? How are the words of the prophet verified in all such instances of his grace? " Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?"

Oh! that the careless and unawakened who read this, may be induced from it to attend to the things that make for their everlasting peace before they are for ever hid from their eyes! How does the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you! " and therefore he will be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him!"

## XLVI.

### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS TO THE GREENWICH PENSIONER, RELATED IN THE SAILOR PILGRIM.

In addressing those brave seamen, which form the body of pensioners in Greenwich Hospital, I feel a confidence both in the natural generosity of the sailor's mind, and in the consciousness that what I have to offer is purely intended for the promotion of their happiness.

I consider, indeed, that few claims can be so well founded as yours are, on the liberality of the nation. And very undeserving, not to say ungrateful, must that man be, who knows how to appreciate real service, that doth not wish to recompence the protection which under God he derives both to his person and property, from the labours of the British sailor, in paying back the tribute of good wishes, at least, if his ability favour no more, for his present and future welfare.

When we consider our insular situation as a nation, and call to mind how much in the providence of God, as instruments in his almighty hand, we owe our very preservation as a people to our navy, (as the many instances of victory in the late war hath indeed fully shewn) it should seem, that there can be but one sentiment upon this subject throughout the land. The universal wish of every real lover of his country must be, that the provision for our brave seamen, when their labours are over, should be such as to render their last days peaceful and happy. Having long and often, through divine mercy, weathered out the storms of life in the active periods of it, they might spend the close in some quiet harbour. And now arrived to the termination of all earthly cares, their minds might be

properly occupied in a due preparation, through the merits of our Redeemer, for that better world "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

And under this idea, who is there that can behold that noble asylum, the Royal Hospital at Greenwich, formed as it is on such a princely establishment, for the retreat of the hoary sailor, but with the most heartfelt satisfaction. Surely among the numberless buildings erected for the kindest acts of mercy, none can be more pleasing, because none form a more splendid monument of national character. And it is impossible but that every beholder who views it, must be charmed with the prospect, when he is made acquainted with the leading design of the charity. The generous mind indeed must be prompted to the wish, that the building itself was yet more abundantly capacious, that it might shelter under its hospitable roof every individual weather-beaten sailor, who hath spent his strength and is fairly worn out in the service.

But while we contemplate this delightful structure with every proper emotion of joy, we cannot but feel proportioned regret, that an institution so admirably formed for the promotion of the best of purposes, both as it concerns the comforts of the life that now is, and the everlasting happiness of that which is to come, should by the perversion of its blessings be productive, as it really is in too many instances of the very reverse for which it is intended.

My aged brother! will you allow me to use freedom? Shall I venture to ask you, is not your situation in the Royal Hospital at Greenwich evidently designed for the promotion of religion and godliness, that the evening of your days may be closed in songs of praise to the Almighty for this instance of his love for you? Is it not supposed by your very admission into this quiet harbour, that the world hath done with

you, and that you have done with the world? And might not every looker on, who beholds the Greenwich pensioner in his retreat be prompted to conclude, that he is engaged in the daily pursuits of what may promote his happiness in another life, while he is daily hastening from this? Would he not suppose that you are walking in holy conversation, as on the shore of eternity, and as one waiting the hourly expected messenger to bid you embark? Would not thoughts like these naturally strike every thinking mind, as forming the general feature in the character of a Greenwich pensioner?

And if charity would prompt the mind to hope such things concerning you, think, my aged brother, what must be the painful feelings of every one who venerates age, and esteems the character of a British sailor, when he is told that the great mass of the hoary inhabitants of this noble Hospital, live, and (and it is to be feared) too often die, in a state the very reverse of what should grace the departure of hoary hairs in their dying moments. It is a fact which cannot be denied with truth, nor acknowledged but with the blush of conscious shame, many, very many of our aged seamen at Greenwich, are daily immersed in the most abominable drunkenness. Nay, to such an extent is this besotting sin followed among them, that it is hardly possible for the most inattentive person, who walks the road between Greenwich and the city, not to have remarked the many awful examples of the kind continually to be met with.

The sight of any man in a state of intoxication, is humbling to our common nature; to behold one formed in the image of God, sunk to the level of the brute. But when it is seen in the hoary head, in the man whose locks are whitened with years, hastening to the grave, with but a few more steps to make before that he arrives there, and yet those steps staggering with

drunkenness, humanity sickens at the view. Surely all the common charities of life are awakened at the prospect. Every heart feels concerned to rescue, if possible, the wretched misguided man from such an end. Every voice would call to him; every hand be stretched forth to catch him before he falls.

But while all hearts and hands on the score of humanity, would readily join to the accomplishment of so much good, it forms an anxious question not easily answered, what weapon in all the armoury of human strength, shall be found competent to undo those chains which habit hath so strongly rivetted on the mind?

No doubt the work belongs to an higher province than man. Yet secondarily and subordinately, under God's grace, the writer of this address is led to hope, that the Greenwich pensioner will be prevailed upon to listen to the voice of entreaty, and from the solemn consideration of the very dreadful events hanging over the prosecution of a path so evil, will attend to "the things which make for his everlasting peace, before they are for ever hidden from his eyes."

In the hope of this, he ventures to present to the Greenwich pensioner an extract from a small work, which hath lately fallen in his way, on the subject of intemperance. The publication is entitled, 'The Sailor Pilgrim.' In one of the chapters of which, the case of sudden death from the effects of drunkenness in one of the ship's company is brought forward; and this solemn providence is followed up in such a train of reflections, as according to his view of things, must argue the mind callous to all the possibilities of feeling, and totally void of grace, which can remain insensible to the impression.

I shall give it in the very words of the author as it stands in the body of the work from whence it is taken. And I shall add nothing to it unless a prayer, that the Lord may bless it to the purpose intended.

## XLVII.

### A MEMORANDUM OF THE LORD'S GRACIOUS DEALINGS.

Among the profitable lessons which God the Holy Ghost is graciously pleased to teach the Lord's people from the sacred word, there is one which the history of the faithful recorded in the holy volume seems particularly to recommend. And yet through the subtilty of the enemy, and the deceitfulness of the human heart, it is certainly not regarded so much as it ought to be. The lesson I mean is, to make memorandums of the Lord's gracious dealings with his people during their eventful journey through this waste and howling wilderness.

When we consider how eminently useful such observations must prove, not only as they manifest the Lord's tender concern for his people, and his kind answers to their prayers, but also as they afford so many props of consolation and encouragement against a dark and disconsolate hour; it should seem that nothing can be more important, than that every one who hath tasted that the Lord is gracious, should make minutes of the divine love, and mark down in the diary of his own life, every circumstance of the Lord's gracious manifestations towards him, as well in the sorrowful as in the prosperous pages of his history. No history, I am persuaded, would be so sweet and refreshing in the review as this; neither would any be equally productive of advantage. The progress of a few months, or even of a few days, in every believer's life, would lead him to see how tenderly the Lord is bringing him on his way; and amidst all the mutability with which his life is marked, how the unchangeable love of God in Christ Jesus continues the same. It was with a

special reference to this, undoubtedly, that the Holy Ghost, whose precious office it is to glorify the Lord Jesus in his people's experience, caused so many instances in the lives of the faithful to be recorded in both testaments of scripture. Jacob's pillar at Bethel; Hagar's well at Beer-lahai-roi; Moses's altar on the victory over Amalek, inscribed Jehovah Nissi; and Gideon's of Jehovah Shalom: what are all these but so many memorials of those sweet and gracious providences intended to refresh the minds of God's people on their way in the road to Canaan? And when the believer himself makes each instance more especially his own, by setting up his own Ebenezer, that hitherto the Lord hath helped him, this becomes practical and personal, and is (in the language of the apostle) what "the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

Convinced as I am of the importance of the thing itself, and that the blessed Spirit under whose inspiration all scripture is written, plainly intended to recommend those instances which he hath graciously recorded in his holy word, as models for the people of God to form their histories of experience upon; I have presumed, through the channel of your miscellany, to drop this hint to my fellow-travellers in the road to Zion. And, if it doth not exceed the limits you may kindly allow me, I conceive the following extract from the diary of one accustomed to remark God's gracious dealings with his soul, may serve as a guide to any of your readers who may be encouraged to adopt the same plan. The author of the diary, it is true, is of the sacred order, but observations of the discipline with which the Lord trains up his people in the school of grace, will furnish similar remarks, according to their respective situations in life, wherever his providence hath been pleased to place them.

Jan. 1, 1797. Lord's day morning. After a comfortable night's rest, through the good hand of my God upon me, I was awakened with a refreshing passage of scripture brought to my mind with some peculiar energy, "Ask what I shall give thee!" I recollected that it was new year's day, and the Lord's day also. The new year's gift I ask, Holy Father, through the name of Jesus, is the blessed gift of thy Holy Spirit, (I replied); increasing grace every day, and that the love of God may be shed abroad more and more in my heart, by the Divine power. Oh, that the grace of the Holy Spirit may rest upon me, in my person, in my family, in the church of Christ, over which the Holy Ghost hath made me an overseer! That I may see the work of the Lord prosper in my hand, and of the travail of my Redeemer's soul, and be satisfied. I found my heart much drawn out in prayer on each of these points, and have reason to bless God for so auspicious a commencement of the new year.

Memorandum in the evening of the same day. Never surely did a year open with more promising and auspicious appearances. I found great strength through all my public services this day, in my morning, afternoon, and evening ministrations. Is it not worth the remark, O my soul, that after the labour of the day was over, and before I sat down to supper, a man came to inform me of some gracious impressions wrought on the mind of a young person in the congregation, under the instrumentality of the word! "Ask what I shall give thee," occurred to my mind most sweetly. Oh, what a God awakening, hearing, and answering prayer, is my God.

Monday morning, Jan. 2. "Ask what I shall give thee," is still my motto; and I pray God that I may never lose sight of it, and of the refreshments which this portion of scripture, applied as it hath been to my

personal experience in yesterday's mercy hath afforded me!

Jan. 10. A day of providences, but not of gratitude. Oh, my forgetful heart.

Jan. 16. The world broke in upon me this day, like a tide—somewhat comforted in the evening.

Jan. 24. Went to visit Mr. and Mrs. ——— on the death of their eldest son. This dear youth was a very promising child; and, from some expressions which dropped from him during his long illness, great reason there is to hope that he was a child of God. What can reconcile us to the separation of ties so tender, but the assurance that our departed child or brother has fallen asleep in Jesus

Feb. 17. Heard this day of the death of Mrs. ——. Poor woman! I lament that any thing should have arisen to prevent me from seeing her in her last hours. She made a jest of my religious principles, and my proud nature withdrew from her acquaintance. But ought I to have withdrawn for this? Might I not have gained upon her by a gentleness of persuasion? Was it not quitting the ground to the enemy, to leave the cause as I did? Lord, lay not this sin to my charge! Oh, may the Lord have regenerated her heart, and received her to his mercy in Christ Jesus, before she was called hence!

Feb. 25. The prayer meeting this evening was particularly refreshing.

Dec. 31. The end of the year 1797, which began so auspiciously, ended as mercifully. And I do not recollect through the whole, that I experienced one half hour's sickness from the beginning to the end of it. Upon the review, I see much to admire and adore of the Lord's gracious dealings, and abundant reason to take shame and confusion of face in my unprofitableness and short comings—" Ask what I shall

give thee," said the Lord. But, Oh my God, how much more bountiful have been thy gifts than my requests!

I shall add no comment upon this diary, but only just to observe, that it is not here exactly inserted as in the original; but only here and there a remark selected, as might best promote the object I have in view in sending it.

## XLVIII.

THE LAST SATURDAY NIGHT OF TIME, AND THE FIRST LORD'S DAY MORNING OF ETERNITY.

I was much struck with the agony of a poor woman in my parish, a few days since, under a renewed instance of distress. I had long known, and as long lamented the wretched state of her misguided husband, who had thrown off all shame, and given himself up to continued drunkenness. Seeing me pass the court-yard of the adjoining house to her own, to visit a sick person, she caught me by the hand, and would not suffer me to depart, until she had given vent to her sorrow. With floods of tears she related to me the awful circumstances of her husband's conduct. She said that he seemed lost to all remonstrances. There was a time, she said, when the love of his children arrested him; for he was then a tender father, and an affectionate husband. But these feelings were so totally blunted by excessive drink, and bad company, that he sacrificed all the indulgence of this one fatal lust. He doth not know, (she added) that I have a morsel of bread for myself and children; and yet, this morning, he took away every farthing I had; and I shall see his face no more until he hath spent all!

I interrupted her story with asking, if nothing had arisen since I last cautioned him, in any way of the Lord's providences, to alarm him? 'Oh, Sir!' said she, 'many, as appeared to me, have been the calls of God, as if personally directed to him, and such as were enough to make the stoutest heart tremble. It is but a few weeks since that one of his companions, when at their drunken party, was suddenly seized with sickness, and compelled to go to bed. The following morning

he was delirious, and the day after a corpse. I did hope such an event would have been sanctified to my poor husband; but, alas! when he heard of his death he expressed little or no surprise; and that very same night joined his other sottish companions! Pity me, Sir,' said she, 'pity me; pray for me; for I cannot pray for him nor for myself. The Lord pardon me; I have said it is no use to pray; I will pray no more! my heart is broken!'

As I returned home, I was led to consider the very awful state of an heart hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. And it served the more to rivet on my mind that sure testimony of scripture, that none but he who made the heart can know the depths of its deceitfulness, or take away its stony nature. And it brought to my recollection a circumstance in proof of it, which took place some few years since in Plymouth, of the most affecting kind. Well do I remember it; for I have great cause so to do, from the interest I then took in it; and from having often since found profit in looking back and meditating upon it. The instance to which I refer, was that of a young man, as promising in respect to form and talents in natural things, as ever the sun shone upon. He unhappily fell into habits of drinking, from gay company, which gradually lessened his attention to business, of which in the first part of his youth he had excelled; until he sunk into the complete character of a sot. It was in the first week of the new year, as I well remember, that he came to me under the most bitter distress of soul, having just awaked, as he expressed himself, from a state of drunkenness. His whole mind seemed convulsed with a sense of the horrors of the situation from whence he had escaped. 'Oh, Sir!' said he, 'had I died; had I awakened from that awful sleep no more; what must have followed in eternity! I tremble as I look back upon it! Where would have been my everlasting

portion! We fell both on our knees in prayer. He left me apparently somewhat composed. But, alas! what followed? The interval of a few months had scarce elapsed before that he fell into the same dissolute course; and one sad morning, after a night of drunkenness, he literally died in the very state which he himself had so tremblingly described to me—a victim to excess of drink; with a constitution worn out, and actually become old when several years younger than thirty! Oh, how forcibly did I then feel the truth of that scripture, and now still more from experience since, "Who maketh thee to differ from another, and what hast thou which thou didst not receive?" 1 Cor. iv. 7.

While I am relating this awful event, I would beg to mention another, which, much about the same time as the former, came under my own observation. It was of a Saturday evening in the summer, when one of those unhappy characters returning from the market, drunk as usual, fell from his horse, and was dead in a moment. The beast on which he rode had carried home his drunken burden for years together in perfect safety, while he himself for the most part unconscious of any thing he passed, hedges or people, from the time that he was helped upon his horse, until taken off at his own door. But this fatal night proved to him, as such nights do to multitudes, the last Saturday night of time, and the succeeding morning the first Lord's day of eternity! Crossing the brook over which the horse had gone with him numberless times before with safety, the poor animal now prompted by thirst, perhaps neglected at the inn, stooped his head to drink; in doing which, the rider, having no command of the bridle, fell at once over the head of the horse; and though there was not water enough in the brook to cover his head, yet he was immediately suffocated from the contents of his stomach and the fumes of the liquor

acting together, which choked him. And who shall calculate the number of similar departures every market day in this kingdom!

But to proceed. Was it not among the providences of God, that much about the same time the poor woman stopped me to relate the circumstances of her husband, I received a letter from a friend in London to say, that if the Lord should incline my heart to write a small tract on the awful consequences of drunkenness, it seemed to be at the present moment greatly wanted; and under the Lord's blessing might be particularly useful? I love to watch the leadings of the Lord. Sure I am, (and it hath long been a maxim with me, and fully justified by experience) that he who watcheth the Lord in his providences will never be without the Lord's providence watching him. Under this conviction, I sat down to the subject. And as I well know what an awful night in most large towns the Saturday night is, when the drunkards from markets, and the labourers and journeymen from work who are addicted to drink, revel away the night at alehouses and gin-shops, rambling home on the following morning to sleep away the Sabbath; I thought the title of my tract would be well suited to all of this complexion, if I called it, 'The last Saturday night of time, and the first Lord's day morning of eternity.' And though, to a staunch sot, every night, and every day, could he gratify his unbridled passion, would be alike to him, yet very certain it is, that the Saturday nights, when the drunken from markets have finished their sale, and men of labour have received their wages, these are the noisy carnival seasons of more determined drunkenness. And who shall count up the number then assembled, in every large town and village of the kingdom, in the ale-houses, and spirit shops every where abounding? Who shall mark down the many instances in that number, where every Saturday night

proves the last night to some, and the next day the first awful day of an awful eternity? Surely had we the faculty to behold objects spiritually, we should behold the great enemy of souls with his bridle in the jaws of his drunken horde, as horses have the rider's bit put in their mouths, goading them, and driving them on, according to his pleasure!

Should it be found that the Lord hath caused this little tract to be written, by causing it to fall into the hands of any one of the drunkards of our British Ephraim, and by blessing it, if but in a single instance, to the heart of any by his grace where his providence shall send it, the writer will find new cause for blessing the God of all his mercies, and the sinner who is now a captive in this chain of sin and Satan, will find cause to join in the song of praise for the unspeakable mercy!

I will begin the subject under the supposition that the Lord shall be pleased to cause these lines to meet the eye of one of this description and character. I will first desire to be attended to, in what I have to say, from some of the lowest considerations, and which ought to affect every character, however addicted to the love of liquor; rising up in point of argument from those which are small and inconsiderable to those which are the highest and the best. And here I would first appeal to the common generosity of the mind. It is not a sure consequence of things that because a man drowns his reason in drink, that he should be lost to the feelings of humanity; many a man that confesseth he is fond of the glass, would blush to be charged with the want of charity. And yet, what charity can there be in a man that adds drunkenness to thirst; wastes and consumes in a few hours what would feed many hungry persons several days? Do you really pride yourself upon your feelings of charity, and tell the world you could not bear to see a fellow creature starving for want of bread, or shivering in the cold for want of a

garment; and yet consume, in intemperance, what would provide both, and make them happy? Are you a man even of common fellow feeling, and recollect how many there are pining away for want of a little cordial to comfort them, while you are swallowing down draught after draught the wine or strong liquor, which serves but to intoxicate? Oh, thou man of drink! relinquish, I charge you, for ever relinquish all pretensions to the love of a fellow creature, when, for a momentary gratification, you can lose sight of all the charities of life!

But secondly. How lost to all the dignity of man must he be, who levels himself with the beasts of the earth, and is content to give up his reason for the enjoyment of drunkenness! I have often thought, with what pity mingled with anger, must angels look down on the haunts of licentiousness. Even heathens held the sin of drunkenness in contempt! It is said of the Spartans, that in order to deter their children from it, they caused their slaves to get into liquor, and then brought them forth to the derision of their household. Are you sunk lower than those heathens? Can you bear to hear the reproachful language, 'there goes a sot!' Oh, what a dignity is the lowest station of honest humble poverty, compared to the highest rank or title, when the name of drunkard is connected with it!

Thirdly. How doth the sin rise in magnitude when we behold men, by such means, acting the robber to their wives and families, in bereaving them of their comfort; yea, of the common necessaries of life, to spend their substance in dram-shops, and ale-houses, and taverns. The imagination can hardly conceive a room of more wretchedness, than that of a solitary wife and children, (and in too many instances which I have seen) with scarce a covering to their bodies, and famine in all their countenances; watching night by night in misery, the return of the husband and the

father; while this unfeeling man is consuming more at these haunts of evil, in each night, than would make his own fire-side comfortable for a week, and gladden his wife and children with his society. It is impossible to contemplate such a scene of real wretchedness but with pain and sorrow!

And lastly, and above all, to add no more (for the mind sickens in the view) if we call into our contemplation the sure and certain consequence, as it concerns the unhappy man himself, of dying out of time in an unrenewed state, and entering eternity; what dreadful apprehensions are awakened in the prospect of the wrath to come! Let any one look on and behold what scenes of the most wretched depravity are going on in our streets, from the effects of drunkenness, with all the consequences of infamy. Let the imagination behold the troops which turn into these haunts, and the troops which are vomited out, night by night, and especially Saturday night, or in the morning before sun-rise, staggering home, as well as the little remaining senses will admit, to their deserted families! Let him follow the history of such awful characters a few days, or months, as the Lord may permit, and behold how they perish and come to a fearful end! And let any man say, what must be the awful close? Surely charity herself can find no place for hope. As they live, so they die; and tumbling into the grave in drunkenness, they almost may be said to pollute the very earth which covers them with their drunkenness. The word of God must be altered, and all the threatenings of scripture reversed; yea, the very nature of heaven's joys must be changed, if dying as they have lived, and without a change of heart, such could be supposed to enter into the kingdom of God.

Is my little tract now in the presence of any one of such a description? Do you feel conviction of these solemn things? In the consciousness of many so dead,

are you affected with concern while living? And doth a question arise in your heart at this melancholy recital? 'Is there a way to escape? May I yet find grace to flee from the wrath to come?' The answer is at hand. Blessed be God there is. And great as offences may be in this and all the other evils of our fallen nature, we are told in the word of God, that "where sin hath abounded, grace doth much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. v. 20, 21.

In confirmation of this blessed truth, let the self-condemned and self-loathing sinner hear how graciously the Lord speaks of pardon, mercy, and peace, by Jesus Christ. And I entreat every one of this description to observe, that where the Lord gives grace to ask, there the Lord most assuredly gives the mercy that is needed, "according to the riches of his glory by Christ Jesus."

As first, by invitations. The proclamations of mercy are all to this amount; they are set forth in the most free, full, and comprehensive manner. The language is, "Ho, every one that thirsteth." "Let him that is athirst, come!" "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink." "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." See Isa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. John vii. 37. John vi. 37.

Secondly. There are added the most gracious promises. The bible is full of them. But, while I refer to many parts in proof, I beg to mention one in particular which is very striking. Indeed it is remarkable, that in my family worship this morning, (Nov. 12, 1816) our portion was the very one. "And they shall come which were ready to perish!" Isa. xxvii. 13. None will come but they that are ready to perish; and he that is conscious of his perishing state and circum-

stances will be glad to come. And as every one out of Christ is in perishing circumstances, what a sweet encouragement it is to hear the assurance of God concerning it—"they *shall* come." What! if sin would obstruct; if hell opposeth; if the world would keep back? Yes! if God says they shall, who will dare to say they shall not? It is the Lord that makes them "willing in the day of his power;" and when the Lord makes willing, all opposition from sin and Satan flies before him. Oh! how doth the blessing of him that is ready to perish come upon Jesus, when the sinner finds in him salvation and life.

Thirdly. But have any in such desperate circumstances been saved? Yes! thousands and tens of thousands now in glory. The title-page of my paper speaks of some in the church who were full of violence and corruption; but the apostle saith, when describing them, "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." A Manasseh, a Magdalene, the dying thief, a Paul; yea, who shall count their number? In the more modern days of our own times, we know of many. John Bunyan, whom the Lord so highly honoured in his service, was once a drunken tinker in the streets of Bedford! What cannot sovereign grace accomplish, when the Lord is pleased to call a sinner "from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan to the living God."

Reader! whoever you are, I shall rejoice if the Lord be pleased to make my little tract minister to your everlasting welfare, and to the Lord's everlasting glory. I have no power of persuasion. This is God's province and not man's. I know full well that to use arguments with sinners who frequent public-houses, or with those that keep them, is alike in vain. To tell the former that death is in the lot, or to tell the latter that his

gain in encouraging drunkards is the price of blood, would be useless. But God can, and God will accomplish all his holy will and pleasure. To him, therefore, I bring the whole. With him I leave the whole. For him I look alone for blessing from the whole. And if the gracious Lord shall be mercifully pleased to bless it to a single soul of his, in converting from the error of his way, the sinner will be blessed, I shall find cause of joy and praise; and God in Christ shall have all the glory.

But if the man of liquor hath not the grace to listen to entreaty, if he turns a deaf ear to the solemn call of exhortation, if neither the word of God nor the advice of man be heard—what shall I say? "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that be lost!" Oh! who can dry-eyed, or heart unfeeling, contemplate the tremendous prospect of such men, dropping into eternity from the confines of time; and falling no more to rise here or hereafter. And how near at hand the hour may be to many in such desperate circumstances! Perhaps not a week passeth but the unalterable sentence is executed in confirmation of the title of this little tract; 'The last Saturday night of time, and the first Lord's day morning of eternity!

# CATECHISMS AND BOOKS

FOR THE

# USE OF CHILDREN.

## CATECHISMS AND BOOKS FOR THE USE OF CHILDREN.

### I.

THE CHRISTIAN'S CATECHISM ON THE GREAT AND DISTINGUISHING ARTICLES OF EVERY TRUE BELIEVER'S FAITH, IN A WAY OF QUESTION AND ANSWER. DRAWN UP FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS, AND FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF PRIVATE FAMILIES.

*Question.* As the foundation of all religion rests on this basis, that there is a God, and as the maxim of the apostle must hold everlastingly true, that "he who cometh to God must believe that he is," Heb. xi. 16. I shall open our subject with desiring you to tell me what are your apprehensions and ideas concerning the being and attributes of God?

*Answer.* My ideas of this first and greatest of all concerns are formed upon what God hath been pleased to reveal of himself in the sacred scriptures; where he is discovered under those great and eternal distinctions of character which represent him as the One, Self-existent, Independent, Infinite, and Eternal Jehovah; possessing all divine attributes and perfections; and resting in his own glorious excellence inhabiting eternity, or to speak of him in the sublime terms with which the apostle sums up his character, "he is the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of Lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, or can see; the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God; to whom be honour and power everlasting, Amen," 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16, and chap i. 17.

*Q.* I am well satisfied with this account of your ideas of God. It corresponds as far as it goes, I believe, with the creed of every man who professeth a

belief in one infinite and eternal Jehovah. Have you any thing further to observe respecting your faith in his being and character?

*A.* Yes; connected with this great and leading truth of the being of God, I learn from the same authority which hath given me this information, another equally important truth concerning him; namely, that the existence of God is distinguished in a way and manner which may be considered peculiarly as his own: that is to say, while every part of scripture tends to confirm the assurance that this great and almighty being is, and must necessarily be in his very nature and essence, the one only and true God, and that there can be none beside him; the same scriptures do as positively declare, that his existence is formed in a Trinity of persons. And in confirmation of this doctrine, there are distinct and specific names in scripture given to each, and by which each is known and distinguished; namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

*Q.* But is not this difficult to reason to explain, that three should be in one, and that one should be in three?

*A.* Yes! difficult no doubt it is to reason to explain, but not irreconcilable to reason to believe. And it should be ever remembered, that it is not proposed to man for his reason to explain, but as an object of his faith to believe. It is one thing to say, that such a truth is above the powers of reason to discover: and another to say, that when discovered, it is against reason to believe. Had man's reason been competent to form suitable apprehensions of God, there would have needed no revelation to have informed him. Whereas, the very idea of a revelation implies, that man without it could have no proper notions of God.—When we consider, therefore, the finite capacity of man, we may well suppose, that the contemplation of such an infinite being as God is, must, after all revelation hath done,

be attended with difficulties. But the greatest wonder rightly considered is, not that we know so little of God but that we know so much. And sceptics, who presume to doubt or deny, because they know no more, would do well to consider, whether if they knew all, they would not even then reject the evidence, and still arraign the divine wisdom in the appointment, in having given finite creatures a capacity to explore what is infinite.

But with respect to the difficulty you speak of to reason of apprehending the doctrine of the Trinity, it will be readily allowed, that reason of itself, untaught of God, never could have made such a discovery. But this, by the way, let me observe, instead of being an argument against the reception of it become no small collateral testimony of its truth. For if the doctrine itself be still difficult to apprehend, even after revelation hath thrown so much light upon it, it will follow, that what man cannot still fully comprehend, man never at the first could have revealed, and therefore it carries with it an evidence in its very bosom, that the first discovery of it must have originated in God.

Besides, if the doctrine of the mode of God's existence in the Trinity be rejected because of its mysteriousness, by the same rule of reasoning we ought to reject the belief of all the glorious attributes of God. I cannot possibly conceive how God should possess all space, and be intimately present in one and the same moment through all the boundless expanse of infinity: but yet I do not hesitate to believe, because scripture assures me so, that God is omnipresent. Neither can I have the most distant idea of an eternity which never had beginning, nor will have end; and yet I never questioned but God is eternal. No man's reason, I will be bold to say, any more than mine, can explain these things; but the reason of sceptics hath never, as far as I have heard, called in question these attributes

of God. And wherefore, the existence of God in a Trinity of persons should be unbelieved on account of its mysteriousness, when scripture so plainly and fully asserts it, is hard to say.

For my own part, I very humbly conceive, that the reason of man alone, and untaught of God, might have led him to suppose, that if there be an infinite and eternal being, who is the Creator of all things, it was likely to imagine that his existence, when discovered, would be found distinguished in a way totally different from all his creatures. And when therefore his own scriptures of truth come into our aid, and tell us that this one glorious and eternal Jehovah exists in a Trinity of persons; this forms just such a description of the greatness and grandeur of his character as might be supposed; drawing as it doth a line of eternal distinction between himself and all the works of his creation. And hence, therefore, it can be nothing but the unhumbled pride and ignorance of the human heart, untaught by grace, to reject this counsel of God against themselves; as on the other hand, it becomes the result of every humble and teachable mind to receive with gratitude the gracious condescension of God in this revelation of himself, and to believe it with thanksgiving.

*Q.* I do not see how your arguments can be refuted. And if you can produce sufficient proofs of scripture to confirm what you say, it will be altogether satisfactory?

*A.* That I can most amply.

*Q.* First then produce your proofs from scripture of the unity of the divine nature?

*A.* "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," Deut. vi. 4.

Again; "There is one God, and there is no other but he," Mark xii. 32.

Again; "There is one God and Father of all, who

is above all, and through all, and in you all," Eph. iv. 6.

Again; "I am God, and there is no God with me. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me," Deut. xxxii. 9. Isa. xliii. 10.

Once more; "Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of Hosts, I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God," Isa. xliv. 6.

*Q.* These are enough quotations in proof of the Divine Unity. Next bring forth your scripture testimonies of the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the Divine Unity.

*A.* "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one," 1 John v. 7.

Again; the Son and Holy Ghost is joined in the same act of adoration with the Father; and believers commanded to be baptized in the joint name of the three. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," Matt. xxviii. 19.

Again; the apostle prays for blessings on the faithful in the same joint name of the sacred Three. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen." 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

Moreover, the same distinctions of character, and the same acts of Deity, are equally and indiscriminately ascribed to all the persons of the Godhead.—As for example, respecting God's eternity. The Father is said to be the Eternal God, Deut. xxxiii. 27. And "Jesus Christ (is said to be) the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," Heb. xiii. 8. And the Holy Ghost is called in the same scripture, "the Eternal Spirit," Heb. ix. 14.

Again; in respect to God's ubiquity. As the Father

is said "to fill heaven and earth," Jer. xxiii. 24. So also of the Son it is said, that "he filleth all in all," Eph. i. 23. And David, under the same assurance of the ubiquity of the Holy Ghost, crieth out, "whither shall I go from thy Spirit?" Psalm cxxxix. 7.

Again; respecting the knowledge of God—"Known unto God are all his works," (saith the apostle) Acts xv. 18. "All the churches shall know (saith Christ) that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts," Rev. ii. 23. And no less also is it said, "that the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," 1 Cor. ii. 10.

Again; wisdom is another peculiar perfection of the Deity. And as in reference to the Father it is said, that "wisdom and might are his," Dan. ii. 20. So in reference to the Son, scripture declares, that "in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Coloss. ii. 3. And the Holy Ghost is expressly said to be "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding," Isaiah xi. 2.

Once more: concerning the Omnipotency of the Deity. "All power (it is said) belongeth unto God," Psalm lxii. 11. "All power is Jesus's, in heaven and in earth," Matt. xxviii. 18. But that these acts of sovereignty are not exercised by either the Father, or the Son, to the exclusion of God the Holy Ghost, it is expressly said in scripture, that "the mighty signs and wonders, wrought in the church, were wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost," Rom. xv. 19.

The same kind of argument in reference to the sacred Three, may be equally applied to every attribute of the Godhead.

*Q.* These are certainly sufficient in proof, and abundantly satisfactory. Have you any other you wish to mention by way of further illustration?

*A.* Yes. I would beg just to observe, in additional testimony, that the exercise of the Divine perfections,

as they refer to us and our nature, are in scripture spoken of as the joint operation of the sacred Three, which serves yet more to confirm the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity.

*Q.* Give your proofs?

*A.* In respect to our creation. It is said, that "God the Father created man," Gen. i. 27. But it is equally said, that "by Jesus Christ were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth," Col. i. 16. Yet that we might not lose sight of God the Holy Ghost in this act of divine power, Job saith, "the Spirit of God hath made me," Job xxxiii. 4.

Again; in reference to redemption. God saith, "I am thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel," Isa. xli. 14. "But thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood," was the song which John heard the glorified inhabitants of eternity singing to Christ, Rev. v. 9. And that neither this was without the concurring operation of God the Holy Ghost, another sacred writer had it in commission to say, that Christ offered himself to God "through the eternal Spirit," Heb. ix. 14.

So once more in the great work of sanctification, Jude says, believers are "sanctified by God the Father," Jude 1. Paul says, they are "sanctified by Christ," Heb. ii. 11. And elsewhere he ascribes sanctification to the Holy Ghost, Rom. xv. 16.

And as in grace, so to the possession of eternal glory, the resurrection of the faithful is ascribed to the joint operation of the triune God. "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them,' John v. 21. So in the same verse it is said, that "the Son quickeneth whom he will;" and in the next chapter it is as expressly declared, "that it is the Spirit which quickeneth," John vi. 63.

And what, then, is the plain and unavoidable inference from all these scriptures but this; that as there are three distinct persons so strikingly specified and

distinguished, and one and the same attribute equally possessed by all, and the same acts equally exercised by all, and such acts as in every instance fully prove Deity; every thing concurs to confirm what scripture hath before asserted, that "there are Three which bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One," 1 John v. 7.

*Q.* I am perfectly satisfied with the relation and proof you have given of the first article of your christian faith. We will go on now, if you please, to the next particular to be attended to in the faith of a christian.

*A.* If you please.

## II.

### SCRIPTURAL CATECHISMS FOR THE USE OF CHILDREN.

#### DEDICATION.

To parents, masters, and mistresses of families, teachers of schools, and all that have charge in the rising generation, grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied! I make no apology for intruding upon you those catechisms. I feel great concern respecting our youth of the present day, who are in the Lord's appointment to succeed you and me in life, and to take part in the concerns of Christ's church upon earth, when "we shall have been gathered to our fathers, and have seen corruption."

I have formed these catechisms for their use upon the principles of the great apostle Paul. Whoever reads his epistles to the churches with attention, will discover that the knowledge and love of Christ was the one leading feature of his faith. He tells the church that "he determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and him crucified. I count all things (saith Paul) but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in him." And the earnest prayer of his soul for the church was, that God would give them "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him," 1 Cor. ii. 2. Philip. iii. 8, 9. Eph i. 17. Under the same persuasion, and supported by such an authority, I have sent abroad these catechisms to the church; that by so familiar a method of instruction, the minds of our children may be stored with scriptural testimonies concerning his person and glory, "whom truly to know is life eternal." And I verily, earnestly, and affection-

ately beg of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, that they will introduce their use among the little ones of their household.

Nothing, I verily believe, will so much tend, under the divine blessing, to counteract the awful and (I fear) increasing heresy of the present day, as an early acquaintance with the person, work, Spirit, grace, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. First impressions are strong and lasting. And scriptural impressions, stamped by the Holy Ghost, upon our children's memories, will rise again to their recollection in the after days of rebuke and blasphemy.

For my own part, I shall have but little or no concern in the events which are ripening fast to desolate the church. "I am going the way of all flesh," and cannot in the nature of things live long to see the Ichabod of Israel. But I very earnestly pray God to preserve the minds of our children from the dreadful apostacy; "and when the enemy comes in like a flood, may he lift up the standard, even Christ Jesus against him."

I send forth these catechisms, as I have every other feeble labour of mine, in the Redeemer's cause, under the hope of the Redeemer's blessing. The Lord commission it, poor as it is, to his glory, and to his holy name be all the praise. Amen.

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ON THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

*Question.* What think you of Christ?

*Answer.* I desire constantly to have such thoughts of him as the holy scripture teacheth, namely, that in respect of his divine nature, he is, as the apostle to the Romans speaks of him (the ninth chapter and fifth verse) "one with the Father over all God blessed for ever, amen." And in respect to his human nature he

was, and is, truly and properly *man*; yea, as the prophet Isaiah spake concerning him (chapter the fifty-third and third verse) "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." And in the union of both God and man in one person, he is the "Mediator of the new testament." So the Holy Ghost hath described him by his servant the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, the ninth chapter and fifteenth verse.

*Q.* Let me hear what proofs you have in scripture concerning the person of Christ under each character. And first begin with the evidences of his Godhead?

*A.* The word of God abounds with proofs of all. I shall select only a few.—The apostle John when describing the unity of the Godhead as existing in a threefold character of persons, saith in his first epistle, the fifth chapter and seventh verse, "there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." And the Lord Jesus himself when speaking of the union between himself and his Father (John the tenth chapter and thirtieth verse) saith, "I and my Father are one." And the same blessed truth the Lord repeats many times in the seventeenth chapter of the same gospel, when speaking of the oneness between him and his Father in the divine nature; and between himself and his people in the human nature, he saith, "I in them and thou in me; that they may be perfect in one." And again, "that they may be one, even as we are one."

*Q.* Rehearse some other scriptures in proof of the Godhead of Christ.

*A.* The apostle John opens his gospel with the strongest testimony to this blessed truth, when he saith, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And the apostle Paul in his first epistle to Timothy, the third chapter and sixteenth verse, under the same inspired

impression cries out, "and without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh." Yea, the Lord Jesus himself confirms the glorious truth when appealing to the works he wrought as so many testimonies of his eternal power and Godhead: "My Father (saith Christ) worketh hitherto, and I work." And, that the jews accepted what Christ said in this sense is evident, "for they took up stones (we are told) to stone him, because he said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." We have this account several times in the gospel, and of the jews attempting to stone Christ for his supposed blasphemy, in making himself God. Thrice in John's gospel; namely, the fifth chapter, seventeenth and eighteenth verses—again in the eighth chapter and fifty-ninth verse—and again in the tenth chapter, from the thirtieth verse to the end.

*Q.* What other proofs have you in scripture to the Godhead of Christ?

*A.* Numberless are the testimonies in the sacred volume to this great and leading article of our most holy faith.

*Q.* Produce a few.

*A.* We find all divine perfections ascribed to the Lord Jesus in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost.—For example. Is eternity the distinguishing character of Jehovah? Then Christ asserts his possession of it, when he said (John the eighth chapter and fifty-eighth verse) "before Abraham was I am." So again, is it a proof of Godhead to be in all places in one and the same time? Then is Jesus God; for he said, "where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them;" the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, and twentieth verse. And the same truth is again repeated in the twenty-eighth chapter and last verse of the same gospel; "Lo! (saith Christ) I am with you always, even

to the end of the world. Amen." Again. Doth a perfect knowledge of all things and all men prove Godhead? Then is Christ God.—"Lord!" said Peter to him, (John's gospel, twenty-first chapter and seventeenth verse) "thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." So to the same purport Christ speaks himself (Revelation the second chapter, the eighteenth and twenty-third verses) "These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire—All the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts." Once more: Doth all sovereignty and power denote Godhead? Surely then Christ is God; for Isaiah ascribes this glorious attribute to Christ amidst one full constellation of perfections, when in his ninth chapter and sixth verse, he calls him, "Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace: and declares that of his government and peace there shall be no end." And lastly, to mention no more,—if unchangeableness of nature, and eternity of existence, constitute Godhead, then is Christ God: for the Holy Ghost by his servant Paul, (Hebrews the thirteenth chapter and eighth verse) hath said, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

*Q.* And doth not holy scripture set forth the Lord Jesus as in the exercise of those divine perfections by which is yet more fully proved his eternal power and Godhead?

*A.* Yes: every part of God's word is full of testimonies to this amount. For beside the daily proof which the Son of God gave when upon earth in the miracles he wrought of raising the dead, casting out devils, bidding the waves and sea to be still, and the like; he is declared to be God by the works which he wrought, and is still carrying on in all the departments of nature, providence, and grace.

*Q.* Give some proofs of these.

*A.* John opened his gospel with testimony of Christ's Godhead in acts of creation; when he said, "all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." And Paul in his epistle to the Colossians, first chapter and sixteenth and seventeenth verses confirms the blessed truth, and adds the further account of the glories of Christ's person, in the cause for which he went forth in acts of creation. "For by him (saith Paul) were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth; visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

*Q.* You have well proved from scripture the Godhead of Christ by his works of creation: what testimonies do you find from scripture also to add to these concerning the works of providence?

*A.* As in acts of creation, so in providence; all the purposes of divine government in the administration of the universe, is carried on by the Lord Jesus Christ. "He upholds all things" saith Paul, to the Hebrews, (first chapter and third verse) "by the word of his power." "The government," saith Isaiah, (ninth chapter and sixth verse) "is upon his shoulder; and of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."

*Q.* And what proofs have you in scripture to the same doctrine concerning Christ's kingdom of grace?

*A.* The whole of redemption is his. For so the song in heaven which John heard declared it, which sounded this sweet note, and was addressed unto Christ; "thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Revelation the fifth chapter and ninth verse. And to add no more, the final close of all in judgment, as in grace, which can be the province of none but God, is declared in scripture peculiarly to

belong to our Lord Jesus Christ.—John the fifth chapter and twenty-second and twenty-third verses. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."

*Q.* I am perfectly satisfied with the proofs which you have brought from scripture in testimony of the Godhead of Christ. I beg to hear, and from the same authority also, the evidences of Christ's manhood.

*A.* The same sacred word which declares Christ to be God, doth as plainly declare him to have become man. John, in his gospel, first chapter and fourteenth verse, there determines the solemn truth. "The Word (saith he) was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory; the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Philippians second chapter, and sixth, seventh, and eighth verses, there speaks of Christ. "Who being (saith he) in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

*Q.* Was it necessary for the purpose of salvation, that the Son of God should thus humble himself?

*A.* Yes. The scripture saith, "that in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." So the Holy Ghost was pleased to declare by his servant Paul, Hebrews the second chapter and seventeenth verse. And in the same chap-

ter, it is said, "that forasmuch then as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage."

*Q.* Did Christ then partake of the infirmities of our nature?

*A.* Yes: of all the sinless infirmities to which our nature is exposed. Hence we read that Jesus was hungry, thirsty, wearied with his journey, distressed, groaned in spirit, wept, and "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Such, and much more to the same amount we read in the scripture concerning him who is called "the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts." See Zechariah chapter the thirteenth and seventh verse.

*Q.* But though Christ in his human nature was thus made subject to all the sinless infirmities of our nature, yet doth not holy scripture declare also that his human being was produced in a way underived from man, and by a miraculous power?

*A.* Yes! for the angel that announced to the Virgin Mary his birth, informed her at the same time how that birth should be produced. In the first chapter of Luke's gospel and thirty-fifth verse we have the account. "The angel said unto Mary, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." And hence the Holy Ghost by his servant the apostle Paul taught the church, Hebrews the seventh chapter and twenty-sixth verse, that such was and is the personal holiness of Christ in his human nature, that it is higher than the angels. "For such an High Priest (saith he) became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than

the heavens." Angels though kept from sinning, are nevertheless capable of sinning, as hath been already proved in those that fell. And accordingly we read in the book of Job, chapter the fourth and eighteenth verse, that "God putteth no trust in his servants, and his angels he chargeth with folly." But of Christ, God the Father bore testimony from heaven, by a voice, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." See the third chapter of St. Matthew's gospel and seventeenth verse.

*Q.* You have sufficiently answered the question I proposed to you, in the proofs you have brought from the word of God to confirm that great truth concerning the human nature of Christ, as you did before on the subject of his Godhead. I would now beg yet further to inquire, what the holy scriptures declare of this glorious person in this union of natures, as peculiarly suited to the office of Mediator?

*A.* The scriptures of God have done this service for the church most fully. Nothing could be more evident than to accomplish redemption, none less than God himself could perform it. He that undertook this great work must have been present when it was covenanted for; and consequently was in that "counsel of peace," which the prophet Zechariah, chapter the sixth and thirteenth verse, saith, "was between them both." Hence we find Jehovah described, Psalm the eighty-ninth and nineteenth verse, as speaking in vision to his Holy One, and saying, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty, I have exalted one chosen out of the people." So that help is laid upon one that is indeed mighty, because he is God; and no less one every way suited to the work and office of Redeemer and Mediator, because he is one chosen out of the people, and therefore man. And by both a proper "Mediator between God and man," as the apostle to Timothy, first

epistle, second chapter and fifth verse expresses it, "the man Christ Jesus."

*Q.* Explain this more fully.

*A.* Had Christ not been God, there could have been no ability in him for the vast work; no merit, no dignity, no power to have wrought out salvation; and to have held in himself and given out to his people in all ages, as occasion required, the blessings of redemption purchased by his obedience and death, in grace here and glory hereafter. Neither could he have been as he now is, the great object of a believer's faith, hope, love, adoration, and praise. And had he not been man, he would not have answered to the promised character given of him at the fall, Genesis chapter the third and fifteenth verse; "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Neither would that scripture have been true, Romans the fifth chapter and nineteenth verse, which saith; "for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." But now, being both God and man in one person, he, and he only, is suited for the great office of our Redeemer and Mediator, and comes up to the full character given of him by the prophet Isaiah, chapter the seventh and fourteenth verse; "the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Emanuel, which being interpreted, (Matthew the first chapter and twenty-third verse) is, God with us."

*Q.* I thank you. These are blessed views of the peculiar fitness of the Lord Jesus Christ for the gracious offices of our Redeemer and Mediator. Allow me just to ask further, is not this sole fitness in Christ the very cause why Jesus becomes so dear in this precious character to all his people?

*A.* Yes! because God and man in one person could

be the only suited Mediator for sinners to look to in their approaches to a throne of grace in this life, or a throne of judgment in the life to come. Hence, the want of a Mediator, before it was revealed to Adam, made this first sinner endeavour " to hide himself from the presence of the Lord amidst the trees of the garden." See Genesis the third chapter and eighth verse. Hence the children of Israel, under dread of the divine presence and conscious of sin, cried out to Moses, as we read, Exodus the twentieth chapter and the nineteenth verse; " Speak thou with us and we will hear, but let not God speak with us lest we die." And hence also Job, chapter the ninth and thirty-third verse, is described as earnestly desiring a Mediator, which he called a " day's man," to stand between God and him, able to lay his hand upon both parties. Such views therefore of what sinners in all ages have felt in the anxious desire for a Mediator when under the alarm of an awakened conscience, may serve to shew the preciousness of him, " whom we have," as the apostle saith, first epistle of John second chapter and first and second verses, " an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and who is the propitiation for our sins." Well therefore may he be dear to his people, who on this account also is dear to his Father, convinced as they are, as the apostle saith, Acts the fourth chapter and twelfth verse, that " there is salvation in no other; neither is there any other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

*Q.* I shall only desire to detain you one moment longer, and just to say, that I hope as the Lord hath given you these scriptural views of Christ's person and character, you will not forget to whom you owe these discoveries, and seek grace to be always using this knowledge to the glory of the great Giver, and to the promotion of your own soul's happiness.

*A.* It is my very earnest desire to bless the Lord

for that he hath given me the "Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." And while with the faith of the apostle, I can, and do say, as he did to our Lord, Matthew the sixteenth chapter and sixteenth verse, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God;" I hope and trust the Lord will say to my soul in answer, as the Lord did to him; "flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Amen.

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ON THE UNION OF CHRIST WITH HIS CHURCH.

I do not think it necessary to follow up the plan I have here prosecuted in my second catechism, with prefixing to it the dedication with which I introduced the former. I felt, I confess, very earnest, when I sent forth that first catechism, 'on the Person of Christ,' to interest parents and the guardians of the rising generation, in a suitable concern for having their little ones well taught (as far as the outward ministry of teaching can reach) on those grand points of our holy faith. And I feel the same, or rather an increasing earnestness now. Every day renders it more and more important; and it is, I conceive, among the highest duties of the parent, anxious for the eternal welfare of his family, to cause his spiritual charge to be well versed in the glorious truths of the faith, "once delivered to the saints;" that, in riper years, they may be able "to give an answer to every man that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear." But having so very earnestly and affectionately recommended a service of this high nature *then*, I hope the necessity of it is superseded *now*.

It is, however, proper for me to observe, that the little work I here beg to present to the parents and guardians of children, is but the continuation of the same interesting subject, and forms a part of one great

whole on those momentous points, on the truth of which depend all the blessedness of " the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Indeed, the one ariseth out of the other. For, next to our clear apprehension of the person and character of Christ, the sweetest and most interesting of all subjects is to know our union, and oneness, and interest in him. When the Lord hath brought us to see who Christ is, the immediate lesson that follows in divine teaching, is to learn who are his people; and, when the Holy Ghost hath graciously instructed our souls in the knowledge of Christ's person, and the oneness of his people in him, the consequence must immediately follow, that our mystical union with Christ is the very assurance and certainty of our communion with him, in all that belongs to the Lord Jesus, as the glorious head of his body the church, " the fulness of him that filleth all in all;" married to his person, we are entitled to all the privileges of his dower; engrafted into him, as branches into the vine, we draw all life, moisture, and fruitfulness from him. He saith himself, " from me is thy fruit found," Hosea xiv. 8. To prove this grand and glorious truth this catechism is designed; and, it is hoped, will be found a very suitable conclusion to the former.

Before I enter upon it, I must beg one moment's patience of the reader further, to obviate any objection which may be brought, from an idea that the questions and answers in it are unsuited to the capacities of children; I beg to say, that this is a mistaken notion. The children of my Sunday School have not found any difficulty in these exercises; they are in the habit of going through those catechisms, not only in their school, but before the congregation; and it is as great a delight to them to be thus catechized, as it is to others to hear them; and certain it is, that children, yea, very little children, are pleased with that mode of teaching which

consisteth in questions and answers. I confess, indeed, that it will not be found all of them possess equal apprehension of what they acquire in this way; neither will the advantages of these scriptural truths, being impressed upon their memory, be at once discovered; but, though in childhood the truths themselves are only committed to their minds, and they are, perhaps, unconscious of their meaning; yet, through his grace, who alone can render all means effectual, I venture to persuade myself, they will be found in the after periods of life, rising up again to their remembrance, like bread cast upon the water and found after many days. I pray the great Head of his church to bless this feeble design to his glory, and his people's welfare; "that God in all things may be glorified in and through Jesus Christ." Amen.

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*Question.* You have satisfied my mind with the answers which you have given to my former questions which I proposed to you, concerning the Person of Christ; I would now beg to ask of you, what the word of God saith, concerning the oneness and union between Christ and his church?

*Answer.* I will endeavour, under the hope of God's grace enabling me, to make answer to your several questions. That there is an intimate union, yea, a oneness between Christ and his church, is so plainly and so fully declared, that the truth cannot be questioned; for while the Holy Ghost by his servant the apostle to the Ephesians, in the first chapter and two last verses, describes Christ as "the Head over all things to the church, which is his body; the fulness of him that filleth all in all." In the same epistle, the fifth chapter and thirtieth verse, it is as plainly asserted, that "we (that is, the church) are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. This is a great

mystery, (the apostle adds) but I speak (saith he) concerning Christ and his church."

*Q.* I should very much like to have the several particulars of this interesting subject gathered into one point of view, and brought forth, one by one, as they appear in the word of God, in order to have a clear apprehension of a doctrine which, if true, ought to be in the daily enjoyment of every believer's faith and hope, that he might carry it about with him wheresoever he goeth, and it might form the daily song of his soul in this house of his pilgrimage.

*A.* The thing is easy to be done; for the blessed scriptures of our God afford ample testimony to this and every other sacred truth, "as it is in Jesus;" and if you will look into them for this purpose, you will find, under God the Spirit, teaching the several evidences appearing with all the fulness of conviction. For the more clear and perfect apprehension of the subject, I shall beg to state it under those three particulars; as first, Christ and his church are called by the same names. Secondly. They are said to have fellowship and communion with each other, and to have one and the same interest. And thirdly. The church not only takes part in what belongs to Christ as Christ, but Jesus doth the same in all that concerns the church as his church. From all which the conclusion is undeniable, Christ and his church are one.

*Q.* Certainly, the conclusion is as you say, undeniable, if the evidences you state are all fully proved. I beg, therefore, that you will explain them, one by one, in order, with their testimonies; and see that all the authority you advance on this interesting subject is from scripture. First then, begin with your own statement; that 'Christ and his church are called by the same names.'

*A.* Christ is the Son of God, so declared, both by word and deed, in every part of the holy volume. The

church also bears this name, in all her members, from her union with him. "Behold! (saith the beloved apostle John, in his first epistle, third chapter and first and second verses) what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called sons of God. Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved! now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, the fourth chapter and sixth verse, was commissioned by the Holy Ghost to tell the church, that "because ye are sons (saith he) God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, whereby ye cry, Abba, Father. Wherefore, (saith he) thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God, through Christ." And the same apostle, in his second epistle to the Corinthians, the sixth chapter and last verse, was commissioned to set forth God the Father, as calling upon the church in Christ, by the name of children; saying, "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty!"

*Q.* What other accounts have you to produce from scripture, in confirmation of this first branch of your argument, of Christ and his church being called by the same names?

*A.* As Christ and his church are shewn to be one in name, he, being in his divine nature truly and properly the Son of God, and they, sons of God by adoption, from their union with him; so Christ, in his human nature, is truly and properly man; and is called so, as well as his church. Hence, Paul to the Corinthians first epistle, fifteenth chapter and forty-fifth verse, calls Christ, "Adam," after our first earthly parent. "The first Adam (saith he) was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. The first man is

of the earth, earthly; the second man is the Lord from heaven."

*Q.* Are there any other similar names common to Christ and his church?

*A.* Yes; Christ is often, on account of his headship to the church, called Jehovah's delight, his beloved, and the like. Thus the Lord speaks of him to the church, in the prophecy of Isaiah, forty-second chapter and first verse; "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth!" And the Lord Jesus himself, speaking of his Father's love to him, expressly ascribes that love to him, as specially, in respect to his office-character, and not on account of his oneness in the Godhead. For the love that one person in the essence of the Godhead hath to another person in the Godhead, is never spoken of in scripture, neither is it within the comprehension of the human mind to apprehend. But the love all along spoken of in the Father's esteem for Christ, is in his office-character as Redeemer. Hence, Christ saith, John the tenth chapter and seventeenth verse, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again." Hence also, Jehovah, by a voice from heaven, more than once declared him to be "his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased." See Matthew the third chapter and seventeenth verse, and Matthew the seventeenth chapter and fifth verse.

*Q.* And is the church in like manner declared to be beloved on Christ's account?

*A.* Yes; the Lord Jesus himself saith; "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." John sixteenth chapter and twenty-seventh verse; and in the seventeenth chapter of the same gospel and twenty-third verse, Jesus expressly saith, that the Father hath "loved the church even as he had loved him." And beside these, numberless are the passages where Christ

calls his church beloved; and the church calls him so. "Let my beloved, (saith the church, in the fourth song and last verse) come into his garden, and eat of his pleasant fruits." Jesus immediately answers, in the opening of the next song, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse. Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." See also the second song and sixteenth verse.

*Q.* Have you any further evidences to the same amount?

*A.* Yes; for as the apostle James, speaking of Christ, saith to the church in his second chapter and seventh verse, "This is that worthy name by which ye are called." So the apostle Paul declares that of him, "the whole family in heaven and earth is named," Ephesians third chapter and fifteenth verse. Hence also, Jesus is said to be "the heir of all things," Hebrews the first chapter and second verse. And his people, by virtue of union with him, are said to be "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," Romans the eighth chapter and seventeenth verse. And as Jesus is "both Priest and King upon his throne," as Zechariah proclaimed him, chapter the sixth and thirteenth verse; so hath he made all his redeemed "kings and priests to God and the Father," Revelations the first chapter and sixth verse.

*Q.* And are there not names of relationship between Christ and his people which bespeak this union still more?

*A.* Most certainly there are. For the Lord Jesus, by assuming our nature, fills all relations which that nature is capable of bearing, and is in one and the same moment, our everlasting Father, Husband, Brother, Friend; and while the Son of God condescends by virtue of his human nature, to acknowledge that relationship, "and is not ashamed (we are told Hebrews the second chapter and eleventh verse) to call us

brethren," he allows his church to be called "the Lamb's wife;" yea, he calls her himself "his sister, his spouse, his fair one," and the like. Upon a remarkable occasion he acknowledged all relations among his people at once. Matthew the twelfth chapter and forty-ninth verse, Jesus said, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

*Q.* Give your scriptural proofs of these things.

*A.* Isaiah, chapter the ninth and sixth verse, calls Jesus everlasting Father; and the Lord, by his servant Jeremiah, bids the church call him so. "Wilt thou not (saith the Lord) from this time cry unto me, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" Jeremiah third chapter and fourth verse. So in like manner the church is told by Isaiah, chapter the fifty-fourth and fifth verse; "For thy Maker is thine husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called." So Hosea was commissioned to speak in the Lord's name, chapter the second and nineteenth verse; "I will betroth thee unto me for ever." So Jeremiah, chapter the third and fourteenth verse, "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you." And in short, through all the bible we find the Lord assuming such names concerning his relationship to his church, and the church to him as fully prove their union. "As one whom his mother comforteth, (saith the Lord, Isaiah sixty-sixth chapter and thirteenth verse) so will I comfort you."

*Q.* Have you any thing further to add on this head?

*A.* Yes; I have one evidence more in proof of the oneness between Christ and his church, from their communion in names, and it is indeed a very striking one. Jesus and his church have one and the same. Jesus is called by the command of Jehovah, "the Lord our righteousness," Jeremiah chapter the twenty-third

and sixth verse. And as if to shew that the church as the wife of Christ, is to have the same name as her husband, in the thirty-third chapter and sixteenth verse of the same prophecy, Jehovah commands the church to be called by the same; "And this is the name wherewith she shall be called, the Lord our righteousness." Yea, what, if possible, becomes a further confirmation of the truth, the church is not only thus commanded to take the name of her Husband, for this is usual in common life, but Christ takes the name of his wife, which is a rare thing. In numberless passages Christ is called "Jacob," and "Israel." "Listen, O isles, unto me, (saith Christ, by the spirit of prophecy, Isaiah the forty-ninth chapter and first and third verses) and hearken, ye people from afar. The Lord hath called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name; and said unto me, thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified."

*Q.* I am both pleased and satisfied with the testimonies which you have produced from scripture, of the oneness between Christ and his church, in the communion of names. So much then for the first of the three particulars you proposed to give me on this interesting doctrine. Let me now hear what are your scriptural evidences of Christ's union with his people from the second point you mentioned, namely, 'the fellowship and communion they have with each other in one and the same interest.'

*A.* The scriptures with one voice tell us, that "we are made partakers of Christ," Hebrews the third chapter and fourteenth verse. And in the first epistle to the Corinthians, sixth chapter and seventeenth verse, it is said, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." And our Lord himself, in his unequalled manner of explaining things, calls himself a "vine," and his people "branches." This figure is pursued at length in the

opening of the fifteenth chapter of John's gospel; and through the whole of the seventeenth chapter of the same gospel, the Lord dwells upon the blessed truth of his oneness with his people in plain terms without figure; "I in them, (saith Christ) and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." And his servant the apostle Paul, following the steps of his Divine Master, declares Jesus to be "the Head of his body the church, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." See Ephesians first chapter and two last verses.

*Q.* What other proofs have we in scripture of the same doctrine, from this fellowship between Christ and his church?

*A.* Abundant are the testimonies in every part of the divine word. An union with him once proved, brings up after it an interest in all that belongs to him. "All things are your's, (saith Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, third chapter and last verse) whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

*Q* Produce some proofs.

*A.* Interest and fellowship with Christ as the Head and Husband of his church, give his people right and title to him, and to all that belongs to him, as Redeemer and Mediator; and though his people have no part in the glory of the work, (for when he wrought it of the people there was none with him) yet have they in all the blessings and the benefits of it. All he *is* is their's; all he *hath* is their's. It is by him, and in him, and through him, they are accepted before God; for so saith the Holy Ghost by Paul, Ephesians chapter the first and sixth verse; "to the praise and glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Hence therefore, they have fellowship and interest in his righteousness to justify them, in his blood to cleanse them, in his fulness to supply them

with all grace, and an interest in all the promises to bless them, and carry them on through the whole of their pilgrimage state, until grace is finished in glory.

*Q.* Give proofs of these things from scripture.

*A.* In the second epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, the fifth chapter and last verse, we read that God the Father made Christ "to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Hence the interest we have in his righteousness to justify. And in the first epistle of John, the first chapter and seventh verse, it is said, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin." Hence the interest we have in his blood to pardon and purify. And in the first chapter of John's gospel and the sixteenth verse, after speaking of Christ as full of grace and truth, it is said, that "of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." Hence the interest we have in all that is in Christ, "in whom all fulness dwells." And in relation to the promises, we know that "all the promises in him are yea and amen unto the glory of God by us." For so certifieth the apostle, second epistle to the Corinthians, first chapter and twentieth verse. So that the church, from her union with Christ, hath communion with him in all that he is, and in all that he hath, as Redeemer and Mediator, for grace here and glory hereafter. And as Jesus himself hath graciously expressed it, John the fourteenth chapter and nineteenth verse, "because I live, ye shall live also."

*Q.* I am satisfied with those scriptural proofs concerning the second point you proposed, as I was before in relation to the first of this interesting doctrine. There remains only the third branch to finish the subject, in which you said, in testimony of Christ's oneness with his people, that he takes part in all that concerns her, as the church doth in all that belongs to him. I beg you to make this appear.

*A.* This precious truth also is equally declared in scripture, and with the same plainness and certainty as the former; for while the whole church takes part in what Christ is, and what he hath, Jesus takes part with them, and what is their's; I mean, that as we are interested in his blood and righteousness, so Jesus feels interested in all our wants, and sorrows, and afflictions; and as all the grace of this life and the glory of another, can only be imparted to us from our union with him, so all the pains of poverty and exercises of temptation can only receive softenings from his participating with us. There is a sympathy, a fellow-feeling in the heart of Jesus for what his people feel; and even now in glory that feeling is not done away. Witness what the prophet Zechariah was commissioned to tell the church; "Whoso toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye," see Zechariah second chapter and eighth verse. Witness also Jesus's calls from heaven concerning the cruelties Saul was then preparing to execute on Christ's little ones; "Saul, Saul, (said Jesus) why persecutest thou *me?*" Sweet thought to the patient sufferer for Jesus! The foot cannot be pressed and the head not feel. See Acts the ninth chapter and fourth verse. He that in "the days of his flesh bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows," equally knows, and feels, and takes part in all the concerns of his people now. Surely nothing can more fully prove a oneness and union.

*Q.* I am perfectly satisfied with your answers on this last question, as in the former. I see very clearly, under each particular, the truth of the precious doctrine you have so clearly established. In conclusion, I would only ask, whether such a conviction on the mind is not productive of great happiness?

*A.* Beyond all doubt, the consciousness of such truths, and the living by faith in the enjoyment of them, cannot fail under the Lord's grace, to beget "a

joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls." The Lord Jesus give this finishing blessing to your heart and mine, and realize that sweet promise of his to us and to all his people. "At that day (saith Christ, John fourteenth chapter and twentieth verse) ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Amen.

## III.

### THE YOUTH'S CATECHISM ON THE ORDER OF THE BOOKS OF SCRIPTURE.

I have often thought, and as often been convinced in the reflection, that it would greatly promote, under divine blessing, the knowledge of the scriptures, if the several books of which the holy bible is made up, were arranged to the readers in the order in which they were written, so as to have a clear idea of the time, the place, and the occasion, as well as any other particulars connected with the leading object of the subject for which more immediately the labours of the inspired writers were called forth. And though I would not be understood by this, as if I meant to imply any defect in the present arrangement of the bible (for perhaps it was hardly possible, when gathering the several parts into one volume, to place them in better order than they are) yet at the same time, I must be permitted to think, that an ordinary reader will have but a very crude and imperfect notion of the whole, unless some means be used to methodize and arrange them to his better apprehension. I question whether there be one person in fifty in any congregation of christians throughout the kingdom, who, if called upon, could tell the different periods in which the inspired penmen of the scriptures lived. And indeed I am fully persuaded, that there are multitudes who read their bibles, and yet are totally unconscious both of the history and age of the writer. How astonished would some be if they were told that the book of Job, though placed so long after, was written many ages before the book of Joshua: that Hosea is the very first, in point of time, among the writings of the prophets:

that Joel, Amos, and Obadiah lived long before Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel; and yet that Haggai and Zechariah were cotemporaries with Ezra and Nehemiah.

In this little catechism it hath been my endeavour to explain these things in the shortest and most familiar manner; and however trifling the service is, and must appear, yet I venture to persuade myself it will be found very useful, under God's grace, to afford a better apprehension of the sacred scriptures. Indeed, so necessary a service I esteem it, that I only wonder that nothing of the kind hath been attempted before (and nothing hath, as far as my observation reacheth) to assist the unlearned in a matter of so much importance.

The form of catechism which I have chosen as the medium to convey this information, appeared to me to be on every account the best. For hereby parents are enabled to examine their children occasionally, as to their progress in scriptural knowledge; and moreover, the impressions made by way of question and answer, on the youthful mind itself, should seem likely to be more lasting; which though the current of the tide wash away, yet, "like bread cast upon the water will be found after many days."—The division of the catechism into lessons, I should observe, is not so much with a view to relieve the minds of the young students (though this consideration might not make it improper) as to help the leading design of the catechism itself; for the lessons are so divided, as will be found on a review, that each forms a period of particular note in the sacred history.

I shall only detain the reader just further to observe, that I send forth this little piece under the same humble dependence of God's fostering care, to render it subservient to his glory, as I have all my other feeble endeavours in the Redeemer's cause; always consoling

myself with this assurance, that divine strength is made perfect in human weakness; and that it is by foolish things the Lord is graciously pleased not unfrequently, to confound the things that are wise.

Perhaps some future day (if a life of but little importance and hastening fast to a period be not finished, before I have finished my design) I may intrude upon the christian world further observations on the several books of God. And I mention it now by way of bespeaking the prayers of the faithful in Christ Jesus, and of recommending myself and my labours to their notice in those more hallowed seasons when drawing nigh a throne of grace. I am too sensible of the many obligations I already owe on this account, not to be very earnest of becoming a further debtor. "For I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through their prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." But whether the great Head of his church and people shall graciously condescend to commission so poor and unworthy an instrument to any further service or not, I cheerfully refer into his wisdom to determine, and in the mean time avail myself of the present opportunity to set up a renewed Ebenezer in a grateful remembrance that hitherto the Lord hath helped me. And may the Lord grant, that when the present generation of servants in his household are gathered to their fathers and have seen corruption, a seed of more faithful ministers may arise, to call him blessed.

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LESSON I.

*Question.* As you are now about to read that sacred book of God "which is able to make you wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. iii. 1. will you permit me before you enter upon it with that view, previously to inquire whether you have a proper

apprehension of the order in which the several books which make up the holy volume are to be placed?

*Answer.* I shall esteem it a favour if you will condescend to examine me on this point. And I very earnestly pray the Lord to be my teacher, that I may "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh me a reason of the hope that is in me, with meekness and fear," 1 Peter iii. 15.

*Q.* I rejoice to find that you both desire to place yourself under the divine teachings, and that you enter upon a subject so truly interesting as the study of the scriptures is with prayer. For though there can be no doubt but that Jesus is the true treasure which is in every part of the field of scripture, yet he will be as hidden treasure until the Lord himself hath given the seeing eye, and the understanding heart to discover; of which we have an awful instance in the case of the jews of old, who with the writings of Moses in their hands, "and the voices of the prophets read to them every sabbath day," Acts xiii. 27. were ignorant of him "to whom gave all the prophets witness," Acts x. 43. But the promise is abundantly encouraging; "to them that are meek the Lord will guide with judgment, and such as are gentle them will he teach the way," Psalm xxv. 9. And if we do upon all occasions, as the disciples did, ask the Lord privately what these things mean, "he will open our understanding that we may understand the scriptures," Luke xxiv. 45.

*A.* This is my uniform desire, and under this persuasion I am prompted to hope that the dear Lord of his people, who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," Heb. xiii. 8. will do by me as he did by his disciples, "draw nigh while we are talking of him by the way, and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, will expound to me in all the scriptures the things concerning himself," Luke xxiv. 27.

*Q.* With this pleasing assurance in view, we will now enter upon the holy bible, and examine concerning the point proposed to our present inquiry, of the order in which the several writings of it are to be placed.—I would first however ask why the book of God is called the bible ?

*A.* It is called the bible, that is, the book by way of eminency, as if (and which is really the case) no other merited the name: this being the only one strictly and properly speaking in the world, because this alone contains "the words of eternal life." In this sacred volume are handed down to us the records of the church of God, from the fall of man to his redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ; and which, however humiliating to the pride of man, is the only subject we are interested in: all the several empires and monarchies of the earth becoming only more or less important as they have ministered to this one grand purpose.

*Q.* I would desire now to know in what order the several books which form this sacred volume are to be placed ?

*A.* I apprehend that the five books of Moses, called Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, with which the bible begins, are to be accepted in the same order in which they stand. They are all said to have been written by Moses under the immediate inspiration of God, and at the time when the children of Israel were in the wilderness, after Moses had been in the mount with God. And this is the opinion both of the jewish and the christian church. Indeed, from a passage in the book of Exodus, (Exod. xvii. 14.) the matter seems plain. For there we find the Lord commanding Moses to write for a memorial in a book the particulars of the war with Amalek; and as this is the first account of any writing whatever, we may reasonably conclude that the same authority which enjoined Moses to write a part of the eventful history

of his church, did not leave him unassisted in other equally interesting particulars of a subject so important, but that he wrote all the books which are transmitted to us under the same instruction and appointment.

*Q.* Be pleased to give some particular account of each of these books of holy scripture according to the order in which they stand.

*A.* The first of them which is called Genesis, (and so called from a greek word, signifying creation, because it contains the history of the creation of the world, as well as the generations of persons and families) begins with the history of the creation of the world about four thousand years before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ;* and after relating the fall of man with the promised redemption, carries on the history of the church in the generations of Adam, Noah, and Abraham, in a regular order to the families of Israel going down into Egypt, including a period of near two thousand four hundred years.

*Q.* What are the outlines of the second book of Moses, called Exodus?

*A.* The book of Exodus, which in the original, signifies going forth, because the children of Israel is here represented as going forth from Egypt; takes up the history of the church from whence Genesis is left off. And as Moses in the first book having given the records of the church while it existed only in one family, in this second he traces it when formed into a nation. In the former, we read how the Lord framed the world for himself and his glory. In the latter, how "he formed Israel for himself and to shew forth his praise," Isa. xliii. 21. The history of the church is carried on in this book of Exodus in a regular order,

* Perhaps four thousand years is not exactly the calculation; but I beg it may be observed, that I have stated the several periods in round numbers here, and throughout the whole catechism, as better suited to be preserved in the memory.

from the departure of Israel out of Egypt to the setting up the tabernacle in the wilderness, comprehending a period of about one hundred and forty years. It may not be amiss to observe, that this book of Exodus is supposed to contain more of the Lord Jesus Christ in types and shadows, than perhaps any other of the old testament. And I mention it the rather in order to refresh the memory, that at any time when reading it we may seek with more awakened diligence for the Lord Jesus in every page, and now that the veil is taken away with which the children of Israel read Moses, and we are enabled to read the old testament scripture through the medium of the new, we may "with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 13, 18. find what our blessed Lord told the jews, that "Moses wrote of him, and that if we believe his writings we shall believe his words," John v. 46.

*Q.* What have you particularly to notice, concerning the third book of Moses, called Leviticus?

*A.* Only this, that it is a book full of types and figures, all referring to the Lord Jesus Christ and to his one all-sufficient sacrifice on the cross, "by which he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified," Heb. x. 14. It deserves our closest attention that it may be "our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ," Gal. iii. 24. But it should be observed, that as it contains only the laws and ordinances of the jewish worship, and contains nothing historical, except indeed in a few instances, we are brought no further in point of time, than we were in Exodus in the church's history.

*Q.* What are the outlines of the book of Numbers?

*A.* Similar observations to what was made on Leviticus may be offered on the book of Numbers. I mean that it is much detached from the main point of the history of the church, and only relates to us the numbering of the people of Israel, during their eventful

history through the wilderness. They are still in the wilderness through this book, only approaching nearer to the borders of the promised land, being in the plains of Moab, by Jordan, near Jericho." See xxxiii. chap.

*Q.* And what have you to remark concerning the last book of Moses, called Deuteronomy?

*A.* The word Deuteronomy signifies the second law, or rather the revisal of it: because Moses was commanded to rehearse the law in the ears of the people, as the generation to whom the first was given were all dead, and it became proper that it should be repeated to their children before they entered upon the possession of Canaan, to which they were now drawing near. This book relates to us the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord. He was now to close his ministry by God's appointment. He had brought the children of Israel to the borders of the promised land, but he was not permitted to bring them in; perhaps hereby typically to represent the inability of the law to bring the people of God to the heavenly Jerusalem, of which Canaan was a type. "For (as an apostle says) the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God," Heb. vii. 19. The progress of the church's history in this book is not at all advanced. They were before on the borders of Jordan, and Deuteronomy brings us no further. It is no small commendation of this sacred book that the Lord Jesus Christ in after ages, when under the temptations of the devil in the wilderness, was pleased to make all the quotations of scripture which he thought proper, to repel his attacks with, from this book; compare Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10, with Deut. viii. 3, 6, 19.

*Q.* Have you any thing further to observe in the order of scripture, before we proceed to the next book, which follows Deuteronomy?

*A.* Yes. I would desire it may be observed, that

the book of Job, in point of antiquity, must be placed before it. It is true indeed, that the book of Job is a detached and unconnected writing, and on that account may be placed any where in the sacred volume: and hence some copies of the Hebrew bible have it after the Psalms, and some after the book of the Proverbs; but it carries with it many internal marks of being much more ancient than either. The great age to which Job attained, seems to imply that he lived before the period of the life of man was reduced to threescore years and ten. And it should seem also pretty clear, that he lived also in the age when the knowledge of God was transmitted not by writing, but by tradition. See Job viii. 8. and xxi. xxix. and xv. And it is not a little remarkable, that Job's manner of expressing the name of God, corresponds to what the Lord said to Moses concerning the revelation of himself to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; "I appeared to them (says the Lord) by the name of God Almighty (El Shaddai), but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them," Exod. vi. 3. Now this (El Shaddai) God Almighty is the more frequent name by which the Lord is made mention of in the book of Job, which certainly carries with it some collateral testimony of its antiquity, and seems to intimate that Job lived in the time of the patriarchal age: so that upon every account, though I would not interrupt the jewish history by placing it between any of the five books of Moses, yet I conceive it to be somewhat important to the reader of scripture to recollect, that the book of Job is of equal date, in point of antiquity, to almost either of them.

*Q.* But hath not some doubts arisen whether there ever existed such a person as Job?

*A.* Yes. Some have ventured to believe that it was written by Moses in Midian, for the instruction of the Hebrews then under suffering, and not designed to imply the reality of the person of Job. But the evidences

that it is the history of a real character, and not the subject of fiction, are, in my apprehension, too many and palpable to render it the least questionable. For not to remark what an illustrious type Job appears to be of the Lord Jesus, and what strong faith he expresses in the assurance of the resurrection, it should be observed, that the prophet Ezekiel represents God himself as joining in the same verse, Noah, Daniel, and Job, which would be absurd upon the idea that Job was only a character of fiction, and not a real person, Ezek. xiv. 14. Moreover the apostle James speaks of the patience of Job, and recommends his example to the imitation of believers; James v. 11. which would be also equally ridiculous upon the notion that no such person ever existed. And lastly, in confirmation of the whole, the apostle Paul makes a quotation from the book of Job, exactly in the same form as is done from the sacred writings, "it is written," compare 1 Cor. iii. 19. with Job. v. 13. which cannot be accounted for on any other principles than that the apostle considered Job as a real person, and the book of Job as among the books of inspiration.

*Q.* I am satisfied with these observations, both in proof of the reality of Job's character, and of the order in which his book ought to be placed in the bible. I will desire you in the next lesson to prosecute the church's history from whence we left off, at the end of the five books of Moses.

*A.* That I shall do most cheerfully.

LESSON II.

*Q.* What part of scripture, in point of order, follows the book of Deuteronomy?

*A.* The book of Joshua, which takes up the church's history from whence the book of Deuteronomy left off on the borders of Jordan, carries it on in a regular progression to the children of Israel's entering into Ca-

naan, and possessing it, comprehending a period of about twenty years.

*Q.* What is there most worthy of note in the book of Joshua?

*A.* Though the book of Joshua is chiefly historical, yet as Joshua himself was an eminent type of the Lord Jesus Christ, both in his name and victories, we ought in the perusal of it to keep in remembrance the conquests which our spiritual Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ, hath obtained for his people over all the enemies of their salvation.—While I am speaking of Joshua as a type of the Lord Jesus, it may not be amiss to observe, that as the name of Joshua corresponds in meaning to that of Jesus, both signifying a Saviour; the translators of the new testament into English have in two places when speaking of Joshua, called him by the name of Jesus, which tends to confuse an ordinary reader. See Acts vii. 45. Heb. iv. 8. We should always remember therefore, when reading those scriptures, that it is Joshua which succeeded Moses in the government of Israel which is spoken of, and not the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Q.* What is the next book of the bible, in point of order, which succeeds the book of Joshua?

*A.* The book of Judges as it now stands; and which carries on the history of the commonwealth of Israel through a period of near three hundred years, under the government of twelve judges.

*Q.* What book should be placed next?

*A.* The book of Ruth, which is the history only of one family, living in the days of the judges, and therefore very properly follows in point of order. This is a very interesting book, inasmuch as it contains in its substance a very beautiful allegory, full of spiritual meaning, when explained by "a faithful interpreter, one among a thousand;" and more particularly it deserves our attention, as it bears in its bosom the rela-

tion, not of "endless genealogies," but of the descent of families after the flesh, leading to the Lord Jesus Christ; but of whom, in respect to his divine nature, "he hath neither beginning of days, nor end of life."

*Q.* Which is the next book of scripture in point of order?

*A.* The first book of Samuel, which finishes in the person of Samuel, the commonwealth of Israel, who was the last of the judges, and opens a new period of history when formed into a kingdom under the government of Saul, the first king in Israel, and containing a period of about seventy years.

LESSON III.

*Q.* You have pointed out the order in which the sacred books ought to be placed, to the end of the commonwealth of Israel. And as the commencement of the reign of Saul, the first king of Israel, opens a new period of history, I would now desire to know what part of the holy volume, in point of order, next follows?

*A.* To the first book of Samuel (the former part of which relates to the end of the commonwealth of Israel, and the latter part the reign of Saul unto his death) ought to succeed the second book of Samuel, as it is placed in our bibles, because it prosecutes the order of history. And indeed, to pursue the thread of discourse as an history only, the reader must go on through both the following books of Kings, and both the books of the Chronicles, (which form a duplicate of the history) comprising the whole of it, both when in one kingdom under the government of David and Solomon, and when divided into the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah under the succeeding monarchies, until the nation was subdued, and the people carried away captives to Babylon, including a period of about five hundred years. But here it is particularly to be observed,

that as during that period the greater part of the other books of the old testament, yet unnoticed by us, were written of consequence within that time they are to be placed, that a better apprehension of the several purposes for which they were written may be hereby obtained.

*Q.* Be pleased to point out the order in which we are to accept them?

*A.* As the second book of Samuel, and the corresponding history in part of the first book of the Chronicles contain the life of David, who succeeded Saul in the kingdom, and reigned about forty years, it should be recollected, that it was during that period the Psalms of David were written, and ought to be placed. And in like manner in the succeeding reign of Solomon, which the first eleven chapters of the first book of the Kings and the corresponding history in part of the first book of the Chronicles record, all the writings of Solomon are to be inserted; I mean the book of the Proverbs, the book of Ecclesiastes, and the Songs of Solomon.—Concerning all these sacred writings I shall only beg to observe, that as "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, so is it profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness." The book of Psalms being a book of experiences, is adapted to the state and situation of true believers in Christ in all ages; but to feel their influence it is necessary, that he, who alone "hath the key of David," should unlock the cabinet of divine truths, and shew them to his people. And if the writings of Solomon also are opened to us by the same heavenly hand, it will appear that in them "a greater than Solomon is here."

*Q.* What part of scripture, beside the books you have mentioned, is to be included during the period of the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah?

*A.* By far the greater part of the writings of the

prophets. For as God was pleased by the spirit of prophecy at the first, which opened at the fall of man, when it was said, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head," to give the intimation of the promised redemption; so the Lord by the same spirit of prophecy, from age to age, unfolded yet more and more in a gradual and progressive manner, the magnificent subject, to keep alive the remembrance of it in the minds of his people. But when at length the children of Israel were settled in their kingdom of Canaan, that Spirit which had before, in obscure terms, only pointed to the person of Christ, now broke out with a brighter manifestation, and under the ministry of one or other of "these holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," almost all the features of the person and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ were accurately described. Here it was, in this period of the church's history, those men of God ministered. Here the outlines of the great Redeemer's character in his incarnation, miracles, death, and resurrection were sketched by them. And here in the fulness of time the Son of God came and manifested that it was to "him gave all the prophets witness," in the fulfilment of the whole.

*Q.* You have said enough to call up my earnest attention to the writings of those holy men of old: be so good now as to point out the order in which their several writings must be placed?

*A.* The preface with which the prophets Hosea, Amos, and Isaiah open their sacred commission sufficiently indicate the age in which they wrote. They all began in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, which was about the year of the world 3250, and 750 years before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And as the same language is used by Joel which Amos makes use of in God's threatened judgments upon Isreal, there should seem no difficulty in arrang-

ing the book of Joel in the same order and time with them. I place all these therefore together as an help to the memory, for though, perhaps, in priority of time, Hosea takes the lead, yet it is not so considerable as to make it an object to be much insisted on in a work of this kind. The prophecies of Obadiah and of Jonah, which follow, may be received in the order that they now stand in the bible. For as the scope of Obadiah's prophecy is directed chiefly to Edom, and Jonah's to Nineveh, they are both in a great measure detached prophecies from the church of Israel, and it is not material when either is introduced. It may not be amiss however to observe, that this Obadiah is not the Obadiah mentioned in the third verse of the eighteenth chapter of the first book of Kings. But of Jonah, though nothing in scripture gives us the certainty of the age in which he lived, yet he is mentioned in 2 Kings xiv. 25.

*Q.* To what book are we next to refer?

*A.* The prophecy of Micah; who lived indeed much about the time of the prophets Hosea, Amos, and Isaiah, but whose prophecy begun somewhat later, as his title-page plainly shews, commencing only in the reign of Jotham, king of Judah, who succeeded Uzziah. And the prophecies of Nahum and Habakkuk, (for these were cotemporaries) will next follow. They prophecied under the reign of Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, about 650 years before the advent of Christ. The prophet Zephaniah will be the next in order, whom God sent to the jews in the reign of Josiah, to admonish them of the impending captivity by the Chaldeans. And when we have gone through the prophecy of Zephaniah, we must turn back to the writings of the mournful prophet Jeremiah, who began his predictions from about the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, until the taking of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, a period of near fifty years. His book of Lamentations

which follow, contains the melancholy elegy of that subject. And with this man's writings we conclude the period of the church's history while continuing a kingdom under the kings of Judah and Israel.

LESSON IV.

*Q.* What is the next step to be pursued by way of arranging the order of the remaining books of the old testament?

*A.* We must now follow Israel into Babylon, under a new period of their history in the Chaldean captivity, where we shall find, that though the church was brought low, to the deepest waters of affliction, yet even here the Lord left not himself without witness, but in the writings of the prophets Ezekiel and Daniel, the former to humble, and the latter to comfort them, the Lord manifested, that though he had fulfilled his denunciations in suffering the enemy for a time to triumph, yet he "had not finally cast away his people whom he foreknew." I have classed both these men of God, Ezekiel and Daniel together, under one point of view, because they are the only sacred writers left on record who wrote during the Babylonish captivity, that it may be the easier preserved in memory during this period of the church. But it should be observed, that these men ministered in different periods of the captivity. Ezekiel had been carried away among the captives some years before Jerusalem was taken, and was prophecying at the same time in Babylon that Jeremiah was prophecying in Jerusalem. Daniel's prophecy appears to have been written after Ezekiel's, and about 600 years before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ; of whose advent, sufferings, and death he so particularly mentions. I detain you only to observe, that I think it may be very safely inferred from that part of Daniel's prophecy which hath been clearly fulfilled, according to the same method of calculation in

time, the other yet remaining to be accomplished, is now verging to the period of fulfilling in the earth.

LESSON V.

*Q.* What is the first book in point of order as we enter on another era in the church's history, after the return from Babylon?

*A.* The book of Ezra takes up the interesting narrative in relating to us the account of the people's return. If you compare the two last verses of the second book of the Chronicles with the beginning of the book of Ezra, you will find the correspondence. And while we read the book of Ezra, we should read also the writings of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, who prophecied during this period of the church, which will throw a light on the whole. See the 5th chapter of Ezra in proof. To these will succeed in the progress of the history, the book of Nehemiah, which is the last historical book in the old testament. I do not forget that part of the book of Esther which follows Nehemiah; but as this is the relation only of one family left behind in Babylon when the captives returned, it is not connected with the thread of discourse in the church's history.

*Q.* Is there any book yet remaining to be noticed?

*A.* Yes; there is one among the writings of the prophets, namely, the book of Malachi, who delivered his predictions nearly 150 years after the two former mentioned prophets, and about 350 years before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ; during which time there was a suspension of the spirit of prophecy in the church.* The first account which we next hear of its breaking forth again, was in the person of Zacharias, at the altar of incense, as we read in Luke the first chapter and eleventh verse.

Thus have I endeavoured to answer, in as brief a

* See my second sermon on the operations of the Holy Ghost.

manner as the nature of the subject would admit, all your questions concerning the order to be observed in the arrangement of the books of the old testament; and shall now, with equal readiness, if you please, proceed to point out the disposition of the several books of the new; between both of which, there is such a beautiful connection and harmony. Suffer me, however, to close our present account of the former, as we begun it, in prayer, that our minds may not be blinded as our fathers in the ancient church of old were, for "they could not stedfastly look unto the end of that which is abolished; and even unto this day the veil is not taken away in the reading of the old testament, which veil is done away in Christ." Lord, hasten the time when the "Deliverer shall arise to turn away ungodliness from Jacob." And in the mean time, may "we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

LESSON VI.

*Q.* In prosecuting the arrangement of scripture in the new testament, what book in point of order are we to place first?

*A.* The several evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as they all relate to us one and the same history in the interesting memoirs of the great Redeemer, it is not at all material which takes the lead. They are so many beautiful duplicates of each other, only with that necessary variety of making up each other's deficiency, that not the smallest fragment on a subject so abundantly important as that which conveys to us the account of the miraculous incarnation, life, miracles, ministry, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, might be wanting. And we have reason to bless the great Giver of all scripture, for having furnished us with so many distinct narratives of Him who is the life and light of his people. In point of order

in which the several evangelists wrote each gospel, perhaps Matthew and Mark should be placed first; for ecclesiastical history gives us to suppose, that their gospels were written about ten years after our Lord's ascension. Whereas, from the same authority we learn, that Luke did not write his until about twenty years after that glorious event. And the beloved apostle John wrote his at a yet further distance, even to sixty years. But it is not so material to consider *when* the several writers were commissioned to this purpose, as to consider *what* they have written, and that they contain the words of eternal life. For my own part, I should most earnestly pray, never to open this blessed book of God, without recollecting whose sacred life it is I am reading, whose actions I contemplate, and for whom the awful sufferings, and death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus were wrought. And when the serious consideration of events at once so painful and so consolatory, hath induced, under divine grace, their proper effects on my heart, then would I pray over the holy word for his blessed teachings to accompany every persusal, that he might glorify the Lord Jesus, by "taking of the things of Jesus, to shew them unto me."

*Q.* What book in point of order is to follow the evangelists?

*A.* The Acts of the Apostles; which takes up the interesting history in rehearsing the events which followed our Lord's resurrection and ascension, in the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the first forming that church of the Lord Jesus, which he hath purchased with his precious blood, and against which the "gates of hell shall never prevail," under the feeble instruments he had appointed the apostles of Christ. The Acts of the Apostles contain, in point of time, a period of about thirty years, and herewith terminates the second volume under inspiration of the events of the

church. For the further relation of it we are indebted to ecclesiastical history.

LESSON VII.

Q. To what book are we next to refer, in point of order, after the Acts of the Apostles?

*A.* The writings of the apostles are the only remaining books to arrange in the new testament. And of those, the first class will be that of the apostle Paul, though not usually in the order they are now placed in our testament. The first epistle to the Thessalonians is unquestionably the first of all the apostle's inspired writings which we have upon record. And the second to the same people, which was written not long after the former, may very properly be placed, for they were both sent to Thessalonica about the year 51 or 52. The epistle to the Galatians I should next place in the arrangement; supposed to have been written about the year 53. To these will succeed the first and second epistles to the Corinthians, said to have been written about the year 56. That to the Romans will next follow, about the year 57. The epistle to the Hebrews next, about the year 61.* Then will follow the epistles to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, and to Philemon; all supposed to have been written nearly at the same time, about the year 63. The first epistle to Timothy will be the next, and is generally understood to have been written about the year 65. The epistle to Titus will then follow; and the second epistle to Timothy (which is the last of the apostle's writings) will finish the list. But as the whole of

* The learned reader will observe, that I take no notice of the disputes which have been brought against Paul being the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, because it is not prefaced in the usual manner of Paul's other epistles. Some have inscribed it to Luke, some to Barnabas, and some to Clement of Rome. It carries with it sufficient marks to satisfy my mind, I confess, that Paul was the writer. But the arguments concerning this point are inadmissible in a work of this nature.

Paul's epistles, which are fourteen in number, were all certainly written within the period of seventeen years, that is to say, from about the year of our Lord 50 to the year 67, (the apostle suffering matyrdom the year after) it is not so very material to contend for exactness in this particular of the arrangement.

*Q.* Where are we to place the writings of the other apostles?

*A.* They cannot be better arranged than as they are already in the testament. The epistle of James was written about the year 60, so that in point of time it takes place, as you will observe, of several of the apostle Paul's epistles, but in the arrangement I did not think it necessary to remark it. The first epistle of Peter appears to have been written much about the same period as that of James, and his second epistle about six years after, anno 67, in which he speaks of his decease, which took place by martyrdom, under the emperor Nero, anno 68. It was many years after, that the epistles of the beloved apostle John were written, and generally supposed to be about the year 90. And that of Jude, though we cannot ascertain the exact time, yet it must have been subsequent to Peter's second epistle; for the apostle Peter speaks of "false teachers which should come;" whereas Jude takes notice when he wrote that "they were come;" (compare 2 Pet. ii. 1. with 18 and 19 of Jude.) The book of the Revelations, with which the sacred canon of scripture closes, is generally placed so late, in point of time, as the year 96; for it is said to have been the visions with which the Lord Jesus favoured his beloved apostle when under banishment in the desolate island of Patmos, and consequently it could not have been written much before that time.

I have now endeavoured to answer the several questions you have proposed to me concerning the order of the sacred books of God in both testaments. I would

only desire to serve the whole up on the knee of prayer, that our apprehension of the *order*, may, under the divine teachings, be followed with the more important object—the *design* for which all scripture was written. And that as the Lord Jesus Christ is the whole sum and substance of his sacred word, he whose gracious office it is to take of the things of Jesus to shew to his people, may manifest him in every page to our apprehension, as the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last;" the author and finisher of salvation for his people. "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things. To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

## IV.

### THE CHILD'S CATECHISM ON PRAYER.

The intention of this catechism is with a view to form in infant minds not only an early habit of prayer, but by familiarizing them with an acquaintance with the scriptures, which explain this important subject, gradually to expand their understandings, to a right apprehension both of the employment itself, and the promises of God held forth to the faithful performance of it, that pleasure and duty may be happily blended; and it is hoped by this means, under the divine blessing, children may be very soon taught to possess proper conceptions of the great object they worship, as a God hearing, and a God answering prayer, and "the sure rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" and also be always "ready to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear."

In order to follow up this important design, it is particularly requested of parents or masters who condescend to make use of this catechism, in the system of instruction they adopt amidst their little charge, to observe, that the subject here treated of, though forming but one and the same from beginning to end, is divided into short lessons, by way of accommodation to children of the tenderest age (none being too young to be introduced into the use of it) that they may not be exercised too much at once, so as to make that become a burden, which, if rightly managed, would prove a delight; but by dropping into their minds as much information only at one time as the capaciousness of the vessel will admit, to increase rather than assuage the thirst for knowledge, and thereby excite the desire of continual gratification.

It is important to observe, that in the answers given

in the following catechism, the chapter and verse of scripture from whence the words are taken, ought to be mentioned by the child, as well as the passages themselves, in order that the authority of the reply may be always at hand, to have recourse to if necessary.

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LESSON I.

*Question.* How do you prove from scripture that prayer is a duty?

*Answer.* Christ says, "that men ought always to pray and not to faint," Luke xviii. 1. and his servant the apostle says, "Pray without ceasing," 1 Thess. v. 17. And again, "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands," 1 Tim. ii. 8. see also Phil. iv. 6. James v. 13—15. Psalm xxvii. 8. Isa. xliii. 22.

*Q.* What promises hath God made to the faithful performance of prayer?

*A.* God hath said, "Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh unto you," James iv. 8. "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will hear thee," Ps. l. 15. see also Ps. cxlv. 18, 19. Matt. vii. 7, 8. Zech. xiii. 9.

*Q.* What conclusion may we draw from both?

*A.* That it is our duty to "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," Heb. iv. 16.

LESSON II.

*Q.* You have proved prayer to be a duty, and shewn what gracious promises God hath made to the faithful discharge of it; I desire next to know how you would perform it?

*A.* I would say unto God, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God!", Micah vi. 6.

*Q.* Hath God given any encouragement to this inquiry?

*A.* Yes; Jesus saith, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me," John xiv. 16. and "all that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," John vi. 37.

*Q.* What conclusion ought we to draw from hence?

*A.* That "having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith," Heb. x. 19—22.

LESSON III.

*Q.* But are we capable of coming of ourselves in prayer before God, and ordering our words aright?

*A.* No; "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought," Rom. viii. 26. "We are not sufficient to think any thing of ourselves," 2 Cor. iii. 5.

*Q.* What is to be done then?

*A.* We are commanded to seek aid from God, and to beg of him to teach us to pray, Luke xi. 1. I would say, "Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise," Ps. li. 15. see also Ps. xliii. 3, 4. Isa. xxxviii. 14, 15.

*Q.* What encouragement hath God given to this?

*A.* God hath said, that "The preparation of the heart of man, and the answer of the tongue are from the Lord," Prov. xvi. 1. and that "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered," Rom. viii. 26. and therefore "our sufficiency is of God," 2 Cor. iii. 5. see also Isa. vii. 19. lvii. 11. Ps. cx. 3. Luke xii. 12. Zech. xii. 10. Isa. liv. 18. xliv. 3. xxx. 21. xxxii. 3, 4. James i. 5. Exod. iv. 11, 12.

LESSON IV.

*Q.* Is it certain then that if I call upon God he will hear me?

*A.* Yes; for he says he "will be very gracious at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it he will answer thee," Isa. xxx. 19.

*Q.* But suppose I am so feeble that I cannot speak?

*A.* God hath said, "It shall come to pass that before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear," Isa. lxv. 24.

*Q.* But supposing that I can only sigh before God?

*A.* It is said, that "The sorrowful sighing of the prisoner shall come before God," Ps. lxxix. 11.

*Q.* But supposing that I can do neither?

*A.* To look unto God with an eye of faith is prayer; for the Redeemer says, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else; beside me there is no Saviour," Isa. xlv. 22.

LESSON V.

*Q.* I perceive what a gracious provision God hath made in divine strength for human weakness, and I desire now to know with what words we are furnished in holy scripture to come before God?

*A.* "Great indeed is the Lord, and marvellous, worthy to be praised; there is no end of his greatness," Ps. cxiv. 4. "Who can express the noble acts of the Lord, or shew forth all his praise!" Ps. cvi. 2.

*Q.* But yet I presume, though all worship must fall infinitely short of his adorable perfections, there are some expressions more suited than others, by which the soul may "serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." How would you express yourself?

*A.* I would say, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come," Rev. iv. 8. I would desire to adore the "Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost,

for these three are one," 1 John v. 7. I would say, " King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see," 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.

LESSON VI.

*Q.* What revelations hath God been graciously pleased to make of himself, to encourage the humble soul, while under the awful sense of his greatness?

*A.* " Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit; to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones," Isa. lvii. 15. " Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word," Isa. lxvi. 1, 2.

LESSON VII.

*Q.* But though God be so gracious by these revelations to lessen in some measure the infinite distance between him and us, as to the greatness of his Almighty character, yet, in respect to the conscious sins and offences of our nature, is not the soul still afraid of immediately drawing near to him?

*A.* Yes; a sense of sin will make every child of God cry out, " O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God! for my iniquities are increased over my head, and my trespass is grown up unto the heavens," Ezra ix. 6. see also Dan. ix. 8. Hab. i. 13. Isa. vi. 5. Ps. lxxvi. 7. xiv. 3. Luke xv. 18, 19. Rom. vii. 34

*Q.* What encouragement hath God given to this state of mind?

*A.* We are taught that " if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins," 1 John

ii. 1, 2. "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy—I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth, for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made," Isa. lvii. 15, 16. see also Ezek. xxxiii. 11. 1 Tim. i. 15. 1 John i. 7, 9. Eph. i. 7. Heb. x. 15.

LESSON VIII.

*Q.* But supposing the soul is still depressed by reason of sin, what would you then say?

*A.* I would say, "O my God! I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not, and in the night season also I take no rest," Ps. xxii. 2. "Be not wroth very sore, O Lord! neither remember iniquity for ever! Behold, see, I beseech thee, we are all thy people," Isa. lxiv. 9.

*Q.* What answer hath God given in his holy word to this increased affliction?

*A.* "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," Isa. i. 3. "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more," Heb. viii. 12. "Only acknowledge thine iniquities, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God," Jer. iii. 13. see also Heb. viii. 12. Jer. xxxvii. 8. Exod. xxxiii. 19. xxxiv. 6, 7.

LESSON IX.

*Q.* How would you now approach after these gracious encouragements from God?

*A.* I would say, "I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Turn thy face from my sins, and put out all my misdeeds," Ps. li. 3, 9. "O, remember not the sins and offences of my youth; but according to thy mercies think thou upon me, O Lord, for thy goodness," Ps. xxv. 6. see also Job xlii. 6. vii. 20. Ps. xxv. 10. xxxviii. 18. xxxii. 5.

*Q.* But supposing that you found no relief?

*A.* I would renew again and again my application, and say, "Hear my prayer, O God, and hide not thyself from my petition; take heed unto me, and hear me how I mourn in my prayer, and am vexed; my heart is disquieted within me, and the fear of death is fallen upon me; fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and an horrid dread overwhelmed me," Ps. lv. 4, 5. see also Ps. lxxxviii. 14, 15. Jer ix. 1.

LESSON X.

*Q.* What answers hath God given in scripture to such prayers?

*A.* He hath said, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins," Isa. xliii. 25. "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us; yea, like as a father pitieth his own children, so is the Lord merciful to them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are but dust," Ps. ciii. 11. see also Ezek. ix. 4, 6. 2 Chron. vii. 14. Jer. xxx. 10, 11.

LESSON XI.

*Q.* Are there any other gracious assurances like these, to comfort the soul under the load of sin?

*A.* Oh, yes; there are multitudes of exceeding great and precious promises to the same assurance. God hath said, "Oh Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help," Hosea xiii. 9. And the Lord Jesus saith, "All manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven unto men," Matt. xii. 31. "All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me, and him that cometh I will in no wise cast out," John vi. 37. And one of his servants, the apostle Paul, saith, "Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession

for them," Heb. vii. 25. And another of the apostles saith, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," 1 John i. 7. Therefore, we may cry out with the prophet, and say, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again; he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea," Micah vii. 18, 19.

LESSON XII.

*Q.* How would you ask God for grace?

*A.* I would say, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me, and it shall put more gladness in my heart than in the time when corn, and wine, and oil increased," Ps. iv. 6, 7.

*Q.* Hath God promised to give this blessing to his people?

*A.* Yes; for he has said, "I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they shall return to me with their whole heart," Jer. xxiv. 7. And Jesus said, "When the Spirit of truth is come, he shall reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment," John xiv. 8. see also Jer. l. 45. Deut. xxx. 6. Zech. iii. 5, 6, 7.

LESSON XIII.

*Q.* How would you ask for the gift of repentance?

*A.* I would beg of God to give me grace to "repent and be converted, that my sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord," Acts iii. 19. That he would "pour out upon me a spirit of grace and supplication, and that I might look upon him whom I have pierced, and mourn as one mourneth for his only son, and be in bitterness as one that is in bitterness for his first-born," Zech. xii. 10.

*Q.* What reason have you to hope that God will grant your petition?

*A.* "Christ is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins," Acts v. 31. "God having raised up his Son Jesus hath sent him to bless us, in turning away every one from his iniquities," Acts iii. 26. see also Rom. ii. 4.

*Q.* What are the marks of real repentance?

*A.* "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death," 2 Cor. vii. 9. see also 2 Cor. vii. 11.

LESSON XIV.

*Q.* How would you ask of God for the gift of faith?

*A.* I would beg that "Christ may dwell in my heart by faith," Eph. iii. 17. That as "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," the Lord would give me to believe, and "help mine unbelief," Rom. x. 4. Mark ix. 24. see also Luke xvii. 5.

*Q.* What reason have you to hope that you shall be heard?

*A.* God hath said, "I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever," Jer. xxxii. 39. "Unto you it is given to believe in Christ," Phil. i. 29. "And as many as received Christ to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 12, 13. see also John iii. 16, 17. Acts xiii. 39. Rom. v. 1.

LESSON XV.

*Q.* What promises hath God made of pardon to our sins through Jesus Christ?

*A.* It is said, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteous-

ness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation," Rom. x. 9, 10. "And in Christ Jesus they who were sometimes afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ," Eph ii. 13. "God hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21. See also Rom. v. 10. John i. 29.

*Q.* Do you not rejoice in this salvation?

*A.* Yes; we have all great cause to rejoice, and to cry out in the words of the apostle, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," 1 Peter i. 3, 4. "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed," Isa. xlv. 24.

LESSON XVI.

*Q.* What are the advantages of this salvation?

*A.* The noblest and greatest imaginable. We are thereby "delivered out of the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son," Col. i. 13. Now "we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord," Eph. ii. 19, 20, 21.

*Q.* How is this proved?

*A.* "After that we believed (the apostle says) we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise," Eph. i. 13. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God," Rom. viii. 16. See also Gal. iv. 6. 1 John i. 3. iii. 1, 2. 1 Cor. ii. 12.

LESSON XVII.

*Q.* Do not all real christians manifest the truth of this change by their holy life and conversation?

*A.* Yes; "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 17. and the desire of all our hearts therefore is, by the mercies of God, "to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service," Rom. xii. 1. See also 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. 1 Peter i. 18, 19. Phil. i. 9, 10, 11. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Phil. iv. 13.

LESSON XVIII.

*Q.* Are we not to be continually looking up to God for grace to enable us to persevere in the path of duty?

*A.* Yes; certainly we are to beg of God, for the sake of Christ Jesus our Lord, to "hold up our goings in his paths, that our footsteps slip not." "I would cry unto God, and say, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth!" Jer. iii. 4. See also Isa. xxv. 4. Phil. ii. 15. Psalm cxli. 3. xix. 14. 2 Cor. i. 12.

*Q.* What promises hath God made to hear those prayers, and to keep his people steadfast in their duty?

*A.* He hath said, "sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace," Rom. vi. 14. "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me," Jer. xxxii. 40.

*Q.* But suppose they are under powerful temptations?

*A.* God says, "when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him," Isa. lix. 19.

LESSON XIX.

*Q.* Suppose the world oppress them ?

*A.* Jesus hath said, "in me ye shall have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," John xvi. 33.

*Q.* But what if their own hearts tempt them to stray ?

*A.* God hath said, "my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness," 2 Cor. xii. 9. "And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able; but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it," 1 Cor. x. 13.

*Q.* And what are we to conclude from such gracious assurances ?

*A.* That God's faithful people "shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his Almighty hand," John x. 20. "I am persuaded (says the apostle) that neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Rom. viii. 30, 39.

LESSON XX.

*Q.* But are not God's faithful people exposed to peculiar trials and afflictions ?

*A.* Yes: "We are in heaviness (says the apostle) through manifold temptations," 1 Peter i. 6. But another apostle says, "No man shall be moved by these afflictions, because yourselves know that we are appointed thereto," 1 Thess. iii. 3.

*Q.* Are such things to be considered as marks of God's displeasure ?

*A.* By no means; but rather, on the contrary, proofs of tender love; for it is said, "that whom the Lord

loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," Heb. xii. 6.

*Q.* How would you pray to God under such circumstances?

*A.* I would commit my ways unto the Lord, and put my trust in him, Psalm xxxvii. 5. "I would pour out my heart before him," Psalm lxii. 8.

*Q.* What promises hath God made to his faithful people, when they pray to him under their afflictions?

*A.* "There are given to us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these we might be made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," 2 Peter i. 4. And we may be confidently assured, that all our trials are but the light afflictions of a moment, which work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 8.

*Q.* But what more immediate comfort doth God give to his people to support them while under their pressure?

*A.* The asurance of his presence and support. "Fear not, I am with thee, I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by my name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shall not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee," Isa. xliii. 1, 2.

*Q.* Are there any other encouragements given?

*A.* Yes; for as a more endearing and tender argument to his people, under sufferings of every kind, God hath proposed the example of his blessed Son; who when upon earth, was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," Isa. liii. 3. He is said to have been in all points like as we are, sin only excepted; that being "touched with the feeling of our infirmities, he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest;

through whom we might come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy, and find grace to help him in time of need," Heb. iv. 15, 16. ii. 18.

LESSON XXI.

*Q.* According to all that you have now represented to me, a life of prayer and godliness must be a life of real happiness and joy?

*A.* Oh yes, indeed it is! for it hath "the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," 1 Tim. iv. 8. "The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 17. "The ways of God are pleasantness, and all his paths are peace," Prov. iii. 17.

*Q.* I presume then that you are more and more desirous to be built up in this most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost?

*A.* Yes; my constant prayers are, "that the Lord may direct my heart into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ," 2 Thess. iii. 5. "And that God himself, and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ may direct our way," 1 Thess. iii. 11.

CONCLUSION.

My prayers join your's, my dear child, in this supplication! "And may our Lord Jesus Christ, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your heart, and establish you in every good word and work!" 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17.

[The following is added as a specimen of what might be formed by way of catechisms from the scriptures, on the great variety of occasions which are perpetually arising out of every man's life, to awaken prayer in the heart. As the questions are perfectly unconnected, they may be used as circumstances shall occur, in the ordinary intercourse of society, and thus form an edifying topic of conversation to raise instruction for the minds of children.]

*Q.* With what devout affections do you wish to open your eyes when awaking from sleep in the morning?

*A.* I would wish to call to mind "that it is of the

Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not; that they are new every morning, and great is God's faithfulness," Lam. iii. 22. I would say, "My voice shalt thou hear betimes, O Lord! early in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up," Psalm v. 3. and I would pray that the Sun of righteousness might arise on my soul, with healing in his wings, Matt. iii. 3. See also Psalm lxxiv. 16. Luke i. 79. Psalm cxliii. 8, 9. cxxi. 8.

*Q.* Suppose it be the Lord's day, would you not add some more particular expressions to your morning ejaculations?

*A.* Yes; I would desire, like the beloved apostle, to be "in the Spirit on the Lord's day, that I might worship God in Spirit and in truth," Rev. i. 10. John iv. 24. I would desire, that as Christ is risen from the dead, so in heart and mind I might be risen with him, "and seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God," 1 Cor. xv. 20. Col. iii. 1. That I might "turn away my foot from the sabbath, from doing my pleasure on God's holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honourable; and honour him, not doing my own ways, nor finding my own pleasure, nor speaking my own words, but delight myself in the Lord," Isa. lviii. 13, 14. See also Psalm lxxxiv. 10. cxviii. 24. Luke xxiv. 34. Phil. iii. 10.

*Q.* What sentiments of devotion doth the noon tend to excite in the pious soul?

*A.* That "the Lord would not cause the sun to go down at noon, nor darken the earth in the clear day," Amos viii. 9, I would therefore say with David, "evening and morning, and at noon will I cry to God, and he will hear my voice," Psalm lv. 17. "Seven times a day will I praise thee, O God, because of thy righteous judgments," Psalm cxix. 164. See also Job ii. 17.

*Q.* What reflections and praises ought to occupy the mind in the approach of the evening?

*A.* To think devoutly of him who "maketh the outgoings of the morning and evening to praise him," Psalm lxv. 8. "To call our ways to remembrance, and ponder the paths of our feet," Psalm cxix. 67. Prov. iv. 26. And to let our prayer be set forth in the sight of God as the incense, and the lifting up of our hands to be as an evening sacrifice, Psalm cxli. 2. See also Ezra ix. 5. Matt. iv. 23. Psalm iv. 4.

*Q.* What reflections and prayers ought the night to awaken?

*A.* To consider the necessity of doing the works of him who hath sent us, while it is day; "the night cometh when no man can work," John ix. 4. and to pray to God to "enlighten our eyes that we sleep not the sleep of death," Psalm xiii. 3. See also Isa. xxvi. 9. Psalm iv. 9. xxxi. 6. cxxi. 5, 6, 7.

*Q.* How would you refresh your mind if awaking in the midnight?

*A.* I would call upon God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night, Job xxxv. 10. I would desire that my soul might flee unto the Lord before the morning watch; I say, before the morning watch, Psalm cxxx. 6.

*Q.* What devout sentiments in respect to God ought the regular return of our meals occasion?

*A.* To reflect and consider how "the eyes of all who wait upon the Lord, who giveth them their meat in due season. The Lord openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness," Psalm cxlv. 15, 16. "That whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, I may do all to the glory of God," 1 Cor. x. 31. and above all, while eating of "the bread that perisheth," to beg of God to feed me with that "bread of life which came down from heaven, and of which whosoever eateth shall never hunger," John vi. 51. "Lord,

(I would say,) evermore give me this bread!" John vi. 34.

*Q.* What devout sentiments in respect to ourselves should our seasons of enjoying food occasion?

*A.* To take heed that our hearts be not at any time overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, Luke xxi. 34. To beg of God that our table be not made a snare to take ourselves withal; and that the bountiful hand of providence which is given for our welfare, be not unto us an occasion of falling, Psalm xix. 23.

*Q.* And what charitable affections in relation to others ought our seasons of refreshment in food to occasion?

*A.* To look up to God with an eye of thankfulness, and to beg of him that while we eat the fat and drink the sweet, he would send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared, Neh. viii. 10. See also Isa. lviii. 7.

*Q.* What pious effects ought to arise in the soul in the recollection of any sin-preventing providences?

*A.* I would say, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which hath kept me this day from this sin!" 1 Sam. xxv. 32. See also vii. 12. Psalm cxviii. 23. Gen. xxviii. 16

*Q.* May not a gracious mind, through God's helping it, extract improvement from the sins of others?

*A.* Yes; for it ought always to teach them this universal truth, "that they that are kept, are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," 1 Peter i. 5. and therefore, if at any time I hear or see the sins of others, and my soul is vexed at the filthy conversation of the wicked, I would desire to acknowledge the grace of God in my preservation, and to say with the apostle, "Lord, how is it that thou hast manifested thyself to me, and not unto the world?" John xiv. 22.

## V.

THE CHILD'S FIRST BOOK: RECOMMENDED TO PARENTS AND TEACHERS PROFESSING GODLINESS, FOR THE USE OF THEIR CHILDREN.

I beg to explain the design of this little book.—It is simply intended to make reading easy to the infant mind. For which purpose the plainest words are chosen; and in the first lessons such as consist but of one syllable. After which, there is a regular advance, as the capacity of the child may be supposed to bear it, to two and three syllables. It is an object of some moment, to make the path to learning smooth and easy; that the footsteps of the learner may meet with no difficulties in the way, but be led on with pleasure and delight.

And it is of equal importance, that while this great object is attended to, the lessons by which our children are taught, should be as much as possible taken from the word of God. The children themselves can have no consciousness of the blessedness of this plan, but parents and teachers professing godliness must be supposed to know. The lessons a child first learns from the word of God, will make the strongest impressions upon the mind, and be the most lasting. They will rise up in an after day to the recollection in all their sweetness. I would have our children, yea, our very little children, from the first opening of their minds, brought into a familiar acquaintance with the holy scriptures, "which are able to make them wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." What words can be so suitable for our children to learn to speak in from the first, as the same words as the Lord hath first spoken to us?

There is another consideration which strikes my

mind as of no small consequence, in the first instruction of our children; namely, to raise improvements for them from every object around, both in the world of nature and of grace. I would have godly parents and teachers avail themselves of every occurrence, that whatever comes before them and calls up their attention, might be made instrumental to lead them to the Lord. The intelligent reader of this Child's First Book, will perceive that I have directed one branch of the instruction here aimed at, to promote this great purpose.

I would beg to make one observation more. Little children are never too little to learn habits of prayer. Even before their infant minds can be supposed capable of forming any suitable conceptions of the nature and design of prayer, still they may be trained in the exercise of prayer. And godly parents may certainly bring up their little ones in this exercise, in such a way as to render the duty pleasing to their tender charge. Our Lord hath said, that "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, the Lord hath perfected praise." And it should seem from hence, that there is a peculiar sweetness and energy in the lisping accents of our children's prayers, coming up before the throne. In the old church upon a remarkable occasion, the Lord enjoined, that both the children, and those that "sucked the breast," should come before him! See Joel ii. 16. I have thought it, therefore, not an unimportant service in this Child's First Book, to have selected some of the sweet promises of our covenant God in Christ, for their use, and, as the reader will perceive, formed short prayers upon them: and I trust that it will be both helpful and delightful to our little children. Persons of riper years will know, without my observation, that the Lord's promises in Christ are the foundation of all our prayers to him; for what the Lord hath first said

to us in grace, is the sum and substance of all that we can say to him, either in prayer or praise.

I have nothing further to add, unless it be to observe, that if godly parents and teachers accept what is here offered for the instruction of their little ones, with the same good will with which it is sent forth, and shall adopt this plan of teaching in the first rudiments of learning in their schools, my object will be abundantly answered in the Lord's blessing upon it. May he, in whose name it is undertaken, commisson it to his praise. And under this impression a thought ariseth to my mind, which wakes and refresheth my heart in the moment of committing it to paper; I feel delight in the prospect that many a child will be using this book to his glory, when the hand that is now writing it will be mouldering in the dust.

[The first six lessons comprise the general plan of teaching children to know the letters of the alphabet, and afterwards to join letters of any words of one syllable. After which I would recommend the teacher to proceed at once to instruct his pupil, as in the following lessons of one syllable from the word of God.]

LESSON I.

God is love.—God is light.—God is good to all.—God is of one mind and who can turn him.—God is a Rock.

LESSON II.

The word was with God, and was God: and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt with us.—Christ is the way, and the truth, and the life: none can come to God but by him.—Christ is Judge, both of quick and dead.

LESSON III.

Sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord all the earth.—I will cry to God Most High: yea, to God will I cry with my voice, and he will hear me.—O be thou my help, O Lord, in time of need, for vain is the help of man.

LESSON IV.

Thou hast made my days, O Lord, as a span long; and mine age is but as a day; and that a day of sin.—I was born in sin. And if I should say, that I have no sin, the truth would not be in me.—Who can say I have made my heart clean, I am free from my sin?

LESSON V.

Lord! blot out my sins as a cloud, and my faults as a thick cloud.—Out of the deep do I cry to thee, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice.—From the ends of the earth will I cry to thee, O Lord!—The Lord hath heard my cry. The Lord will hear my prayer.

LESSON VI.

The Lord doth mind us, and he will bless us. He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great.—O fear the Lord, ye that are his saints; for they that fear him do not lack.—I will lay me down in bed, and take my rest; for it is thou, O Lord, that wilt keep me.

LESSON VII.

Praise ye the Lord. Ye that stand in the house of the Lord: in the courts of the house of our God.—Praise the Lord, O my soul! While I live will I praise the Lord; yea, as long as I have breath, will I praise his name. Day by day will I give thanks to the Lord; and he shall be my song each night.

LESSON VIII.

Bow down thine ear, O Lord, and hear me. Make me a clean heart, O God.—Teach me thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in thy truth. O knit my heart to thee, that I may fear thy name.

LESSON IX.

O praise God, for he is good. Praise him in his great acts.—Praise him on the lute and harp. Praise him on the strings and pipe.—Praise him in the song

and dance. Praise him both old and young.—Let all that have breath, praise the Lord.

LESSON X.

O Lord! my times are in thine hands; and sweet is the thought that they are. The wise man saith, that there is a time to be born, and a time to die. A time to sow, and a time to reap. A time to weep, and a time to laugh. A time to get, and a time to lose. A time to keep, and a time to cast off. O Lord! how sweet is the thought, that my times are in thine hands.

LESSON XI.

Christ is the bread of life. So Christ saith. And so I pray to know. For he saith, I am the bread of life. If a man eat of this bread, he shall live. And Christ saith the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. And if ye eat not the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Lord! I would say, give me this bread, that I may have life in me: and do as thou hast said, for thou hast said, I will raise him up at the last day. Lord! let it be so to me.

LESSON XII.

Christ is the true vine. A child of God is the true branch. But as a branch will not bear fruit if it be not in the vine; so no more can we, if we be not in Christ. But Christ saith, I will be as the dew. Ye shall grow as the vine; and your scent shall be as the wine. For Christ saith, from me is thy fruit found. Oh! for grace to be found in Christ, and to bring forth fruit to God!

LESSON XIII.

Christ and his church are one. For so he saith. I in them, and thou in me. And hence he saith, I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine. So Christ adds, that they all may be one; as

thou art in me, and I in thee, that they may be all one in us. And Christ adds, I will that they may be with me where I am; for I dwell in them, and they in me.

[When the child is able with ease to read portions of scripture, similar to the foregoing lessons, it will be proper to go on to words of two syllables as in the following six lessons.]

LESSON I.

God the Father hath so loved us, as to give his only Son. Herein is love. Not that we loved God, but that he loved us. If God so loved us, we ought to love as God hath loved.—God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.—Behold! what manner of love the Father hath given to us, that we should be called the sons of God. Now are we the sons of God. And it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

LESSON II.

Christ so loved us as to give himself for us. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. But God commends his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.—Behold then the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for sinners. Oh! the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge!

LESSON III.

Now the Lord is that Spirit. And Jesus said, I will send you the Holy Ghost; even the Spirit of truth: and he shall guide you into all truth.—No man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.—As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.—Jesus said, when the Holy Ghost is come, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things. He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

LESSON IV.

For there are Three that bear record in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these Three are One.—Hear, O people: the Lord our God is one Lord.—Now God himself, and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.—For through Christ we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Amen.

LESSON V.

The word which came to the prophet from the Lord.—Arise, and go down to the house of the potter, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the house of the potter. And behold he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay, was marred in the hand of the potter. So he made it again, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Cannot I do with you, as this potter, saith the Lord? Behold as the clay is in the hand of the potter, so are ye in mine hand.

LESSON VI.

And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.—And they asked him, saying, Master, who did sin; this man or his parents, that he was born blind?—Jesus said, neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be shewn in him.—I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work.—As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.—When Jesus had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and put it on the eyes of the blind. And said unto him, go, wash in the pool. And he went, and washed, and came seeing.

[Then follows words of three syllables, and a table of figures and numerals. —A few lessons by way of specimen of what I proposed is here introduced, in aiming to raise improvement for the chil', from the several objects which came before him. It might be profitable to learn these out of book.]

LESSON I.—Of the Lamb.

When you see a lamb what should it lead you to think of?—I would think of Christ, the Lamb of God; for the lamb is white, and so is Christ. The lamb is meek, and so is Christ. The lamb is harmless, and so is Christ. The lamb will take wrongs, but never give any. And such was Christ, when he was reviled, he reviled not again.—The lamb is slain for food; and so was Christ. His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. Jesus saith himself, that if we eat not his flesh, and drink his blood, we have no life in us.—The lamb when taken to be slain is dumb; and so was Christ. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.—The fleece of the lamb is made to clothe us; such is the robe of Christ; Jesus clotheth our souls.—On all these accounts, when I see a lamb, I would desire to think of Christ.

Hail! Lord Jesus, thou Lamb of God! may I still behold thee as a Lamb in the midst of the throne. Still behold thee as a Lamb slain. And wast thou slain for me? Yea, for me! and art thou food for me? yea, for me! Art thou my robe to cover me? Oh Lord, cause me to be meek and lowly in heart, that I may find rest unto my soul. Amen.

LESSON II.—Of Bread.

How much the daily use of bread reminds the soul of Christ.—Bread is the staff of life, and so is Christ. Bread is needful every day, and so is Christ. Yea, we need Christ *all* the day, for without him the soul must perish for ever.—Bread is sweet to the hungry body, but how much sweeter is Christ to the hungry soul. Blessed, saith Jesus himself, are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.—How sad would it be to have a famine of the bread of the body! But how far more dreadful would it be to have a famine of the bread of the soul!—The bread for

the body must be eaten, or it will not nourish; and Jesus, the bread for the soul, must be eaten by faith, or we shall not live with him. Jesus saith himself, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.—Is it so then, that Jesus, the bread of life, is so needful for my soul; and doth the Lord Jesus propose himself to my soul, saying, I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever! Lord! I would say, as I ask in my daily prayer for my daily bread, so give me of this bread of the soul, that I may eat and live for ever. Lord, evermore give me this bread!

LESSON III.—Of Water.

As often as I see water, I would think of Christ.—How sweet is water when I thirst; so is Christ to a thirsty soul.—How needful is water to make my body clean! But Oh! much more the water of life, even the blood of Christ, to cleanse my soul from sin. Hence the Lord saith, I will sprinkle you with clean water, and ye shall be clean.— The river is open, is free, is full, it flows for ever. But how open, how free, how full, and for ever flowing is Christ! The call is, Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. And Jesus saith, I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.—Come then, ye that are athirst, come to Jesus and drink. And ye that are unclean, come to Jesus that he may cleanse you. And my soul, do thou not only invite others to come, but come thyself to the Lord Jesus for both. For he hath said, all that do come, he will in no wise cast out. Christ is a river, the streams thereof make glad the city of God.

LESSON IV.—Of Names.

Wherefore did Hannah call her son Samuel? She

saith herself, because I have asked him of the Lord. So that every time she looked upon her child, she might call to mind that this son of her's was the Lord's gift.—Holy men of old were very fond of calling their children by such names as might remind them of the Lord's favour towards them.—It was most likely, with this view, the name of Mercy was first given to the child of some believing parent.—And what can act so ready to bring Christ home to the remembrance of the heart as mercy?—Jesus is himself the sum and substance of all mercies. He is the first-born in the womb of mercy; the mercy of mercies; yea, mercy itself in the full, for out of him nothing can be called mercy.—Christ is also needful to make every thing a mercy. Every mercy must be *in* Christ, *from* Christ, and *by* Christ. Until Christ is seen in it, and enjoyed in it, there is no mercy there, be it what it may. All the sweetness in it, is from Christ; all the value of it, all the right to enjoy it, is of Christ. And what sums up all, and endears Christ in all is, that Christ himself is the free, full, and never to be lost mercy of God. Oh, the mercy of mercies, Jesus Christ. And shall I not, as often as I hear the name of mercy, think of the Lord Jesus Christ?

LESSON V.—OF THE ROSE.

There is somewhat in this sweet flower, the rose, which ought for ever to remind me of Christ. Indeed Jesus calls himself the Rose of Sharon. And in how many ways Christ is set forth by the rose.—If it be the red rose, I would call to mind that Jesus was red in his apparel, when he wore a vesture dipped in blood.—And if the white rose, might not this set forth the spotless state of that nature that had no taint of sin, but was holy, harmless, and pure.—And if both, like the blushing rose, might we not still say with an eye to Jesus, as the church did; my beloved, said she, is white and ruddy; the chiefest among ten thousand!—

And if the sweet-scented smell of the rose be fragrant to the senses of the body, what are all the blessed perfumes of Jesus to the soul?—If we adorn the bosom with the rose of nature, and find it lovely for beauty and for odour; what must be that rose of grace, for fragrancy and for ornament, even Jesus himself, when Christ is worn in the heart, and formed there the hope of glory?

Jesus, thou blessed Rose of Sharon, cause the desert of my poor heart, by thine indwelling presence there to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

LESSON VI.—Of Relations.

Hath the Lord blessed me with the kindness of friends, and given me to know, in the finer feelings of nature, what kind of love that is, which is formed in a family of children and brethren? then let it lead me to Jesus, who stands in the place of all; and fills up the place of all; and is, in one and the same moment, my father, brother, husband, friend! He saith himself, as one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you!—Christ in his human nature, is the true seed of the woman; and is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. And though now exalted at the right hand of glory, still he wears our nature, and is not ashamed to call us brethren.—As often, therefore, as I think of the kindness of the father, brother, husband, friend, cause me, Lord, to think of thee, and in that love of thine, which passeth all knowledge, may I enjoy all the sweetness of relations. Thou art a brother born for adversity; a friend that loveth at all times; yea, one that sticketh closer than a brother. Yes, blessed Lord Jesus, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise, and all thy father's children shall bow down before thee.—And I beseech thee, O Lord, to own me for thy poor brother; for surely, thou hast redeemed both my person and my lost inheritance. Say thou now, O Lord, as thou didst in the days of thy flesh, he that doeth the

will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

[Similar lessons might be added, from the several objects which occur in life, to raise improvements to the tender mind of the child. The rock, the vine, the root, the plant, the sun, the morning star, &c. all these might be so noticed, as to lead to Christ; but the foregoing specimens are sufficient in proof.

[I presume that the learner is by this time sufficiently conversant with the plan of reading, so as to enter at once upon the scriptures. The Psalms, the Book of Proverbs, and many parts of the Gospel, furnish out some of the sweetest and plainest words in our language. And a child cannot begin too early to be acquainted with his bible.

[I have but one thing more to accomplish in this Child's First Book, and that is, agreeable to my promise, to introduce the little learner into the method of forming habits of prayer from the *promises* of God; and which the following lessons may serve as examples for a much larger illustration of this mode of instruction.]

LESSON I.

God the Father hath said, in many parts of scripture, when speaking of the church, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Now there is more foundation for holy joy in this one promise, than in a thousand worlds. Hence, therefore, I would desire grace to believe in this promise, and pray over it in full assurance of faith, and humbly speak to God in his own blessed words, and say, do, Lord! as thou hast said; be thou my God, and make me of thy people.

LESSON II.

The Lord Jesus hath said, if a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. And in the same chapter, the Lord Jesus hath also said, I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. Here are, as the apostle calls it, exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature. For surely, in the everlasting presence and indwelling abode in our heart

of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, must be comprehended every happiness both of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

Hence, therefore, here again, as in the former instance, the sweet promise which comes from the Lord Jesus in grace and mercy, I would send back to the Lord Jesus in faith and prayer; and say, come, Lord, as thou hast said! May God my Father come, and the Lord my Redeemer come, and God the Holy Ghost come, and live and make their abode in my heart, and reign and rule in me for ever! Amen.

LESSON III.

One of the sweet promises of scripture runs in these words—all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children. Hence I would have every little child who wishes to read his bible, and to learn to know the Lord, bring this promise before the Lord, and say, hast thou, most gracious Lord, thus sweetly promised that all the children of Jesus shall be taught by the Spirit of Jesus, and great shall be their peace? Do thou then, O Lord, condescend to teach me! Give me to set at thy feet, and learn of thee, thou heavenly Teacher, that I may find rest unto my soul.

LESSON IV.

That was a very gracious promise given first to Abraham, and in him all the seed of Christ was included, in which the Lord said, I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.

Hence, in the view of this most delightful promise, which is a covenant promise in Christ, every child should plead for the fulfilment of it before the throne, and say, remember, Lord, thy promise unto thy servant, wherein thou hast caused me to hope. Remember

thy word unto thy servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and in Christ, to whom all the covenant blessings referred, make this, and every other promise, yea and amen in Christ Jesus.

LESSON V.

The Lord hath said in one of the prophets, by way of special promises to the children of Christ, I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses.

Now let a child present himself before the Lord, while reading this sweet promise, and put the Lord in mind of it; hast thou promised, O Lord, our Father, (I would say) to pour thy Spirit upon the seed of Christ, and thy blessing upon his offspring? O, then, let it please thee to give me to see that I am, as Isaac was, a child of promise, an heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ. Then I shall receive for Jesus's sake all the blessings of the Holy Spirit, my bread shall be given, and my water shall be sure; yea, as a babe in Christ, the Lord will give me the sincere milk of the word, that I may grow thereby.

And the Lord that feeds, the same will clothe me; for he will give me beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. So that when Jesus hath, according to his promise, sprinkled me with clean water, and made me clean from all my filthiness, and from all my idols; and made me comely from his comeliness put upon me, then shall I sing with the church, the sweet song of praise to his name, and say, I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

LESSON VI.

The Lord hath not only promised to bless, and feed, and cleanse, and clothe his children, but to heal them in their sickness, and to correct them in their transgressions. The Lord saith, as a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep, so will I seek out my sheep, and deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick.

Is the child sick in body, or in soul? Is he wandering and forgetful of his prayers? Or hath he offended and erred from the right way, as a lost sheep? Let him look to the Lord Jesus in the view of those rich and gracious promises, and form them into prayers for the Lord's blessing. I would say, Lord, thou knowest that the poor strayed sheep returns not of itself to the fold; though I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost, O seek thy servant for I do not forget thy commandments. Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee. And hast thou not said, if his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, I will visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips; once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David. Oh, then have respect, Lord, to thy covenant, and for Jesus' sake pardon and forgive; cleanse and heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee!

LESSON VII.

Among the innumerable promises of the Lord to his people, those are eminently precious which hold forth

a grace to help in every time of need. We have a cluster of them all in one in the opening of the forty-third chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah; and the whole and every portion of them in Christ Jesus, like all the other promises of the bible, in him are yea, and in him amen, to all his people.

But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel; fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel thy Saviour.

Here is enough for a child taught of God to pray upon, and to plead with, and to praise the Lord for, through the whole of life, and in every state, until life is summed up in eternity.

Suppose one of this description spread these rich promises of the Lord (as Hezekiah did the letter) before the Lord, that thus so graciously promiseth.

Let him tell the God of Israel, God in Christ, that both created and formed his people for himself, and to shew forth his praise, what the Lord hath here said. I would say, yea, Lord, thou hast indeed redeemed me, thou hast called me by thy name, and I am thine. Hence in every place and in every way, through fire and through water, by sea, and by land, by day and by night, I need not fear, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. No flame shall kindle upon me, no waters overwhelm me; for the Lord will bear me up, and bear me through, and bear me home to his everlasting kingdom.

And whence all this kindness but from thine own free grace? Thou hast not only given Egypt for my ransom, but the blood of Christ for me. Thou hast re-

deemed me, and I am thine. Surely goodness and mercy hath followed me, and will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. Amen.

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I hope these few lessons, by way of exemplifying the observation, will be sufficient in proof how suited the *promises* of a covenant God in Christ are for forming *prayers* upon; and no less shew, at the same time, how easy and practicable it is for children, yea, little children, to be taught habits of prayer in the use of them. It were easy to have added many more to the same amount, but the limits of this publication forbid.

I cannot take leave of the subject, however, without first observing, that while this plan may be made so useful to teach our little *children* the exercise of prayer, the promises of God in Christ would form to *riper* years an everlasting source for their prayers and praises before the throne, in all their pilgrimage state through life. If truly awakened believers would accustom themselves to mark down, morning by morning, and night by night, the Lord's gracious dealings with their souls, they would discover so many instances of the Lord's coming forth in his promises, and revealing himself to them therein otherwise than he doeth to the world, as would call forth unceasing prayers and praises for the same, to the bountiful Author of all their mercies.

It is in promises, and by the accomplishment of them, those sweet moments of undescribable communion which take place between the Lord and his people, are carried on in all the visits of his love. The promises of pardon and peace, of joy and comfort; the promises of wisdom and knowledge, and counsel and direction; the promises of victory over sin, death, and corruption; of grace to help in every time of need. These, and the like, form endless subjects

for errands to the throne, and afford endless arguments to form prayers upon, and fully recompence the waitings of the believer, when in those hallowed seasons he is led by God the Holy Ghost to the mercy-seat of God in Christ, to plead the fulfilment of all the promises which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. But I add no more.

[Perhaps it may not be unacceptable to some of the public teachers of our schools, to know the form adopted in 'the household of faith,' in Plymouth, at the opening and close of the school, in the children's religious exercises. For their information the following is added.]

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STANDING ORDERS FOR THE SCHOOL OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH.

At every opening of the school the elder scholar then present gives out a psalm or hymn, as the master or mistress shall appoint. The children then join in singing, and when ended, the psalm or hymn is followed up by prayer, all devoutly kneeling, while the elder scholar saith—

PRAYER.

O Lord God! who dwellest in the high and holy place, and yet hast condescended to say, that to that man wilt thou look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit. Vouchsafe to regard us of this school, who earnestly look up, and implore a blessing from thee, O Lord! By reason of the fall of man, we are all naturally blind, and ignorant, and helpless. Do thou, O Lord! be pleased to bless the means which are here made use of in our schools for our recovery from this wretched state of nature, by bringing us into a state of grace. Yea, Lord, grant that we may be instructed in this most blessed scripture, which is able to make us wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

It is said, O Lord, in thy holy word, that all thy children shall be taught of thee. O let it be proved

hereby that we are all thy children, in the Lord himself becoming our Teacher.

Let thy blessed word dwell in our hearts richly in all wisdom; and give us grace to carry home with us, and to manifest to all with whom we have to do, the sweet impressions of grace taught us in our school; that all may know that we have been sitting at the feet of Jesus and learning from him.

Make all we learn profitable to our souls, and to thy glory, and grant us such a sanctified use of our learning, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us; lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all. Amen.

When the school exercises are all finished, before the dismission of the scholars, all sing together *Gloria Patri* to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, &c. After which, the following prayer is offered up by the elder scholar, the whole assembly devoutly kneeling:

PRAYER.

We desire, gracious Lord, before we separate from each other, and depart from our school, to approach once more thy throne, to bless and praise thine holy name for all the mercies we have received during our continuance here, and for all the instructions the Lord hath vouchsafed us in our learning. Lord, grant that all blessed and gracious consequences may follow, that being trained in grace, we may live to thy praise.

Bless, O Lord, the benefactors and teachers of our school. Recompence their kindness to us, by granting

to them an increase of knowledge and delight of divine things in themselves; and let all their labours of love be returned with sevenfold blessings into their own bosoms. And now, O Lord, go with us to our several habitations, and prepare us for the everlasting enjoyment of thy presence in that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all. Amen.

## VI.

### THE CHILD'S SECOND BOOK.

A full year hath run out since I sent forth into the religious world, the Child's *First* Book for the instruction of little children. It is my mercy, and I desire to bless the Lord for it, that through his grace, it hath found its way into many schools of this description; and I trust, from the same Almighty cause, it will, in due time, be extended further, and become more generally useful.

Very sure I am, that all godly parents and teachers have increasing motives to watch over the spiritual interests of the rising generation, and to exercise an holy jealousy in respect to those plans of education which modern times have introduced. The good old way of instructing children in the word of God is giving place to stories and romances, which can have no good effect, but rather to corrupt the mind, and keep from them the word of salvation; and some of them, by teaching the very reverse of holy scripture, have yet a more fatal tendency—to make them infidels.

I bless the Lord in the very moment that I am now writing, that this degenerate system of education was not in general practice in the days of my childhood; and I cannot be sufficiently thankful, that the school in which I first learnt to read, had all the lessons gathered from the bible. Precious book of God! and surely, if to the divine view the importance of the thing itself was so great, that the Lord enjoined the children under the old testament dispensation, to be constantly taught in his sacred word, how increasingly great must be the obligation to the children under the new? What a beautiful form of words the sacred writer hath made use of in following up the command of the Lord, upon this occasion! "These words which I command thee

this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house, and on thy gates," Deut. vi. 6. and xi. 18, &c.

I have aimed at this great object through the whole of this second book, and endeavoured by scriptural illustrations to recommend and to endear to the young pupil, the whole of the lessons here given. One point in particular I have had in view in this little work, namely, to bring our youth into an early acquaintance (as far as human instruction can lead) with the plague of their own heart. Self-knowledge and a conscious apprehension of the sin of our fallen nature, in which we are all born, and with which we all grow up, until grace renews the heart, become, in the Lord's hand, sweet means to humble the soul, and to endear Jesus; and never can they be too early learnt, or too strongly impressed upon the mind. May the Lord graciously commission these lessons to his glory and our children's welfare.

I only add a prayer to the Almighty Giver of every perfect gift, that he may bless both this and the former little labour of love with his grace, that every succeeding generation may be a seed to serve him when I am gathered to my fathers, and have seen corruption!—Amen.

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SIX LESSONS FROM THE WORD OF GOD, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

LESSON I.

And Israel said unto Joseph, do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee

unto them. And he said unto him, here am I. And he said to him, go I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

And a certain man found him, and behold he was wandering in the field; and the man asked him, saying, what seekest thou? and he said, I seek my brethren; tell me, I pray thee, where they feed the flocks. And the man said, they are departed hence; for I heard them say, let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.

And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him. And they took him and cast him into a pit; and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. And they sat down to eat bread.

OBSERVATIONS.

And did not God our Father send his beloved Son from the realms of bliss into this our world, to see if it were well with us, and how we fared? But though he came full of love, and mercy, yet when he came unto his own, his own received him not. Did they not conspire against him to slay him? Nay, why do I say, did *they* not? Have we not *all* by sin conspired against him and slain him? And was not Jesus stripped of his raiment, and cast into the pit where there is no water? Did he not make his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was there any deceit found in his mouth? Oh! thou Almighty Joseph of thy brethren! give me grace to see, that though thou hast been despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,

yet wert thou sent of God our Father to look after thy brethren, and provide for their everlasting welfare. Hail, thou dear Redeemer! henceforth may the language of my heart be, blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord.—See Poor Man's Commentary on the Bible. Gen. xxxvii.

LESSON II.

And the king of Egypt charged all his people, saying, every son that is born of the children of Israel, ye shall cast into the river; and every daughter ye shall save alive.

And when Moses was born, by faith his parents hid him three months because they saw he was a proper child, and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. And when his mother saw that she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off to wit what would be done to him.

And the daughter of the king of Egypt came down to wash herself at the river, and her maidens walked along by the river side. And when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maids to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child, and behold the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, this is one of the hebrew's children.

Then said his sister to the king's daughter, shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And she said to her, go. And the maid went and called the child's mother.

And the king's daughter said unto her, take this child away, and nurse it for me; and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto the king's daughter; and he became her son.

OBSERVATIONS.

How often do the plans of bad men counteract their own designs! How often do they themselves prove instruments to accomplish the very reverse of what they intend! Little did the tyrant king of Egypt think, when he gave orders for the destruction of the sons of Israel, that his own daughter should be made the instrument to save a child which should afterwards prove his destruction, and the destruction of his kingdom; and, in like manner, little did the jews in after ages think, when they nailed Christ to the cross, that that very cross should be the salvation of the Lord's people.

But before we dismiss this sweet and precious history, look at it once more. God the Holy Ghost hath said, that it was by faith the parents of Moses undertook to conceal their child at first for three months, and afterward exposed the child to such danger, where if not quickly destroyed by beasts, either the water or hunger seemed certain destruction. But see what faith in God wrought! by the Lord's grace in so ordering, the babe is not only saved, but saved in such a way, that the mother herself shall receive her child to her bosom again, and even be paid wages for nursing her own. And he that was cast out to perish, shall be not only preserved, and kept safely, but become the son of the king's daughter; and there receive that learning which should qualify him for the Lord's minister. Lord, increase our faith!

LESSON III.

And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bear spices, and very much gold, and precious stones. And when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart: and Solomon

told her all her questions; there was not any thing hid from the king which he told her not.

And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cup-bearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her.

And she said to the king, it was a true report that I heard in mine own land, of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit, I believed not the words until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and behold! the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

Happy are thy men! happy are these thy servants, which stand before thee, and hear thy wisdom! blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighteth in thee to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he the king to do judgment and justice.

OBSERVATIONS.

It should seem from the short history of the queen of the south, that her visit to Solomon was not with a view to discover his knowledge in human things, but in those which are divine; for it is said that the fame she had heard of Solomon was concerning the name of the Lord. But if she came so far as to hear the wisdom of Solomon, with what earnestness ought we to go to Jesus, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge? And if such were the surprising effects wrought on the mind of this woman in the view of Solomon, think, if it be possible, what surprise will overpower the soul of the redeemed when they arrive at the court of Jesus in heaven! How doth the Lord tell us now all that is in our heart, and shew us that there is nothing hid from his knowledge of all that

passeth within our most secret thoughts! and how will he discover to us, when we shall see him as he is, and when we shall know, even as we are known!

And if the spirit of the queen of Sheba fainted within her when she beheld the order of Solomon's house, the meat of his table, and the attendance of his servants; what will be the effect on our spirits when we shall behold Jesus in his kingdom, feeding his redeemed, and leading them to fountains of living waters? Oh! how blessed will it be to behold the attendance of his servants, the angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, surrounding his throne, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands! Solomon was said to be happy, and his servants happy; and he himself blessed of the Lord. But Oh! what tongue shall express the blessedness and glory of Solomon's Lord, even Christ Jesus. Surely every knee will bend before him, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

LESSON IV.

And it came to pass that Jesus went into a city called Nain, and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and much people of the city was with her.

And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, weep not. And he came and touched the bier, and they that bare him stood still. And he said, young man, I say unto thee, arise! and he that was dead, sat up and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. And there came a great fear on all. And they glorified God, saying, that a great prophet is risen up among us, and that God hath visited his people.

OBSERVATIONS.

Surely we have in this short history, short as it is, a most finished picture of sorrow. Here is the death of a son, a young man, not an infant, but one grown up to ripeness, capable of giving comfort to his parent. And he was an only son; so that when he was taken away, every green branch of hope in the house was gone. And to heighten the sorrow yet more, the mother was a widow, so that now she was husbandless and childless—every staff was taken away.

And now behold the Lord Jesus! his love and pity felt for her, and that affection was instantly manifested in bidding her dry up her tears, and in turning her sorrow into joy, in raising her dead child. Think what effect must have been wrought upon every one who beheld it! think what were the feelings of the mother on beholding the opening eyes and returning life of her dead son! think what glory resulted from the whole to the Lord Jesus Christ! and what will be the glory given to Jesus when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they which hear shall live?

LESSON V.

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him; and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and

said unto him, take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee.

OBSERVATIONS.

And who was this certain man which had fallen among thieves, but our poor nature, ruined and robbed by sin and Satan? and who is this kind and compassionate Samaritan, but our Lord Jesus Christ? when neither law nor priest could give relief, and none among angels or men could help us out of our miserable state, the Son of God came and made towards us; bound up our wounds, and poured into them the balsam of his blood; brought us to the inn of his church, commanded the host, even his ministers, to take care of us with all suited ordinances and means of grace; and hath promised, when he shall return, to recompence every act of kindness shewn our nature for his sake, as if done to himself. Blessed Samaritan! heal those deadly wounds made by sin and Satan, and take my soul home to thy church in grace here, and glory for ever!

LESSON VI.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep-market, a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, and withered, waiting for the moving of the water; for an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water. Whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

And a certain man was there which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he said unto him, wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man when the water is troubled to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, rise! take up thy bed and walk.

And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.

OBSERVATIONS.

Behold in this scripture, the picture of the world at large! the whole earth by reason of sin is but like those cloisters of sick folk. The world itself is but one large hospital, where there lay a great multitude, yea, all mankind, of blind, halt, and withered; all sick in soul, and dying, and dead in trespasses and sins.

The waters of ordinances are like this pool of Bethesda; and when the angel of the everlasting covenant gives effect to their healing quality, the soul of not only one at a time, but every one to whom the blood of Christ is applied, is made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

But that we may learn also that the God of ordinances is not confined to ordinances, the Lord Jesus, as in the instance of this poor man, can and will heal without them; and however long, or however desperate the disease, even to eight and thirty, or twice eight and thirty years, let Jesus speak but the word, and instant healing must take place. Blessed for ever be our God and Father that the Spirit of the Lord is with Jesus, and hath sent him to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

[Then follows tables of spelling of four, five, and six syllables, and also of stops and marks, after which the following lessons.]

LESSONS.

The children of the school in Plymouth, called 'the household of faith,' are taught to commit to memory certain lessons whose subjects are gathered from scripture; and once in the year, at their exhibition before the subscribers, they repeat them: and it is really astonishing to hear with what strength of memory and

propriety of expression, some of them, and even very little children, go through those exercises. Under the presumption that gracious parents and teachers of schools may be prompted to adopt a similar plan of education among their little charge, the following samples of lessons are subjoined.

N.B. The scriptures referred to or quoted in those lessons are added, because it forms no unimportant part, in order to bring our children into habits of acquaintance with the word of God, to make them always produce their authority.

LESSON I.—THE SHUNAMITE.

2 Kings iv. 37.

It was a gracious act of kindness for favours received, when the prophet Elisha inquired of the Shunamite, what he should do for her. Behold, saith he, thou hast been careful for us with all this care: what is to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people, 2 Kings iv. 13.

It is blessed, yea, very blessed, to dwell among our own people, as this Shunamite did, when, like her, our people are the Lord's people. But the Lord's people have an advantage *now* which in the days of the prophet Elisha was not so well understood. They need no prophet to speak for them to the king: for the king himself knoweth them, loveth them; is conscious of all their wants, all their desires; and is much more disposed to give than they are to ask or receive.

The Lord Jesus bids them come to court every day, and all the day; and calls upon them to unbosom themselves to him with the greatest freedom, and with the fullest assurance of being heard and answered; nay, if he sees them backward of coming, like those ashamed to come, Jesus is so gracious, that he saith, he will come to them. My beloved, saith the church,

spake and said unto me, rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away, Song ii. 10.

And shall we not go to court, when the king himself so kindly invites? Shall any of his children be afraid to accept the gracious invitation? Oh! how unbecoming and unsuitable would this be! Great men and princes of the earth may indeed look shy upon their subjects, and carry themselves proudly. But it is not so with Jesus. He that is prince of the kings of the earth, is meek and lowly in heart. He delights to see all his redeemed at his court. And amidst the vast throng of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, which surround his throne above, he will not overlook a single one of his little ones below. He sees all, knows all, loves all, and will bless all.

Come then, let us all go; methinks I would not have one of you that is loved of my Lord, and who loves the Lord, to stay away. Surely it is Jesus's pleasure that you should come. And shall it not be yours? Doth Jesus call and you refuse? Doth the Son of God say, come, and will you say nay?

What! are you still afraid that Jesus will not receive you? Oh! do not think so; it is impossible for any of his redeemed to go to Jesus, and find no favour. Jesus keeps open house every day, and all the day; yea, the gates of that blessed city where Jesus reigns, are never shut day or night. And he sits as a Lamb in the midst of the throne, to feed and bless all his people: so that all must speed; and each shall have his own separate and special mercy. And as Jesus himself doth welcome all, and with his own hand supply all, so none, not the poorest, or the most unworthy, will be sent empty away, for it is his grace, and not

our deservings, which become the cause of his bounty. He saith himself, be it known to you, O house of Israel, that I do this not for your sakes, but for my holy name's sake, Ezek. xxxvi. 22.

Oh! when I think what multitudes of precious souls are going to Jesus every day, and all the day; and how the Lord is supplying every want, and every necessity of his redeemed; my very heart is comforted in the view. Neither can there be the least fear that we shall exhaust Christ's riches, for his fulness is in itself endless. And the more Jesus gives, the more his people have to receive; for as he enlargeth the vessels of our hearts, the more room he makes in those hearts to be filled of his overflowing love. See whether you can drain the sea dry with a shell: see how much you can carry away of the ocean in your hand. Still less can the whole church both in heaven and in earth diminish of the bottomless, boundless ocean of Jesus's fulness!

Come, then, let every poor child of Christ go daily, hourly, to the throne of Jesus, (and, my soul, do thou go also). And let us all, as the psalmist sweetly expresseth it, enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and speak good of his name. For the Lord is gracious; his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth from generation to generation. Amen. Psalm c. 4, 5.

LESSON II.—THE PRISONER.

"I was in prison, and ye came unto me."—Matt. xxv. 36.

I passed a prison; there stood at the window of it a poor man with a sick and sorrowful countenance, looking through the iron grate, in a dejected manner, upon the unthinking multitude which were passing by, who all seemed to be too much intent upon their own concerns to bestow a thought upon his.

Here is one more (I said to myself as I looked at him) of those unhappy creatures who by sin hath forfeited his liberty, and must now wait to receive the

punishment of a broken law. To what a state of misery hath he brought himself! taken from all that is near and dear to him, here he is shut up in this prison, and cut off from all society, that sweetener of many of the bitters of life; he can no longer partake of any of those comforts which home, however homely, might afford: for him, no wife, no children, in the evening of the day, when the poor man's labour is over, waits his return, looking for and welcoming his approach; no church-going bell on the best of all days can call on him, and bid him come to the house of prayer, there to forget the toil of the six days in the sweet rest of the seventh!

And what, and when will be the end of his captivity? If he be a debtor, perhaps he may rot in the prison before his debt be paid. And if he be a criminal, charged with sins of a deeper dye, here he must remain until brought forth for trial. And what then will be the result? who will take up his cause? who will become the poor man's advocate when he hath nothing to pay?

But while I contemplated this poor prisoner in his captivity, how little did it strike me at the moment, that this man's case was my own. It is I which am the very captive that I am beholding; the world is daily passing by me, while I am looking through the iron grate of my prison-house of sin.

For is this man a debtor to some rich creditor? so am I; for I owe to my Lord ten thousand talents, and having nothing to pay—I am insolvent for ever. Is he a criminal to the laws of his country? I more; for I have broken the laws of my God times without number, and am justly exposed to the sentence that follows. And what is the confinement of this world's prison to the bondage chains of sin, the accusations and alarms of a guilty conscience; the dread of death, judgment, and eternity?

And what, and when will be the end of my captivity? when a few years, or months, or perhaps days are passed, I shall be brought forth like this poor prisoner for trial; his indeed will be before an earthly judge—mine before an heavenly; for we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.

And who will plead my cause? Who will feel interested in my everlasting concerns? Sure I am I have nothing to pay, nothing to give that can induce any to advocate for me.

What saith the word of God? Can I find encouragement there? Is there any that doth now, or that will then appear for my soul?

Blessed be the Lord; there is one and but one that can and will be my friend. And who is he? it is Jesus. He is indeed one born for adversity; a friend that loveth at all times. And God the Holy Ghost gives a blessed testimony concerning him: for in one scripture he saith, his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor; and in another he recommends him under this very character to the poor sinner.—If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins. So that Jesus is not only the Counsellor, yea, the Wonderful Counsellor and Advocate for his people, but he is their propitiation also; for he hath bought out, and paid for the ransom both of their persons and transgressions by his blood.

Neither is this all. For God our Father, our Almighty Creditor, and whose laws we have all broken, is the very person who hath set forth Christ as a propitiation through faith in his blood; yea, the Lord hath appointed Jesus as our Advocate, and by an oath sworn him into this office: so that he is a lawful Advocate, as well as a full propitiation. And to sum up all, God our Father hath made him also our Judge; for we are told that the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed

all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. So that in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, we behold him in one and the same moment, our Wonderful Counsellor, our Advocate, Propitiation, and Judge.

And will Jesus indeed be all these and infinitely more for me, and every poor self-condemned sinner? Oh! then as often as I see a prison-house and a poor prisoner, may I call to mind my state by reason of sin, and my dependence upon Jesus for the delivery of my soul; and while looking forward to the sure event of death, judgment, and eternity, may those blessed views of Jesus comfort and refresh my soul. Let my poor unworthy heart take confidence in Jesus. He (I will say) that is then to be my Judge, is now my Propitiation, my Advocate, my Brother, and my Friend! and surely then thou wilt answer for me, O Lord, my God. Yea, in that all-decisive hour I shall hear the gracious voice coming forth from the throne: deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom!

LESSON III.

"I was a stranger, and ye took me in."—Matt. xxv. 35.

It was blessedly said by Moses to the children of Israel, when reminding them of their mercies, in order to induce them to shew mercy to others; love ye (said he) the stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

And from whom hath the stranger of every description and character equal claim for mercy as from the people of the Lord? Who so forlorn in the original state of a fallen nature? Who so much a stranger and sojourner as the christian pilgrim? For although as the children of God in Christ from all eternity, they were his children in his eternal purpose, counsel, will, and pleasure, yet were they by nature and by practice, enemies to God by wicked works; and as God the Holy Ghost witnesseth, were all serving divers lusts

and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another!

It is truly blessed to trace this in the history of all the children of God upon earth, considered as in their state of nature, and before that a work of grace hath passed upon their soul. Yea, there is not one among the redeemed now in glory but can and must remember, to heighten the joys of heaven, the forlorn state from whence they were all taken when gathered out of it by the Lord Jesus Christ: a stranger to the plague of their own heart; a stranger to all the efficacy of the means of grace, yea, to a sense of any need of them; a stranger to all the glorious persons of the Godhead; ignorant of the Father's love, the Redeemer's grace, and the Spirit's fellowship! and who then could more properly be called a stranger while remaining in this awful state of an unawakened, an unconcerned, an unregenerated nature, than the child of God, while living without God and without Christ in the world?

And if now they are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, how came they so but because they are brought nigh by the blood of Christ, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, Eph. ii. 18, 19, 20.

And will not all such, as often as they see a stranger, be reminded of these heart-melting circumstances, and recollecting what their state once was, to feel for what his now is? Ye know the heart of a stranger, said Moses. Yes, truly my soul replies, I do. Oh! then for grace, if the Lord gives ability also, to do as Job said he did. I opened my doors (said he) to the traveller, and suffered not the stranger to lodge in the street, Job xxxi. 32.

And who knows what gracious, what royal, yea, what angelic persons a man may take in when shelter-

ing the stranger: angels have come down before now in the likeness of men, and visited our earth. Be not forgetful, saith the apostle, to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares, Heb. xiii. 1. Lot did so; and what a blessing followed. The angels he received into his house but for him might have lodged in the street all night. And what a day to Lot and his family succeeded. See Gen. xix. throughout. Yea, the Lord of angels, when he came upon earth, came as a stranger, and had not where to lay his head, Luke ix. 58.

Lord, give me grace, that when at any time I behold a poor stranger, I may recollect and say, Jesus was once a stranger; and who knows, perhaps this poor stranger belongs to Jesus? In all thine may I view thee; and since I cannot open to thee, may I do all for them who are thy representatives. Jesus is looking on; and Jesus hath said that every act of kindness shewn them, he takes as done to himself. Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me, Matt. xxv. 40.

### LESSON IV.—Jesus Healing the Sick.

When I see any of the Lord's family that are sick and sorrowful, I am led to ask, with the prophet, is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? Jerem. viii. 22.

To which I answer, yes; there is both balm in Gilead, and there is a physician there: for the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ is the truest balm to heal all disease which sin hath made; and Jesus himself, the great and only Physician that can cure the sins and sorrows of his people. And he saith to all his people now, as he said to his Israel of old, I am the Lord that healeth thee, Exod. xv. 26. But if this Almighty Physician be not known, and if the pre-

cious balm of his blood be not applied, is it to be wondered at that the health of the Lord's people be not restored?

Am I speaking in the presence of any sick and sorrowful soul? Then would I say, in words similar to those of the little maid that was carried away captive from Israel, when she advised her mistress concerning her sick master; would to God you were with the Lord God of the prophets, even Jesus Christ; for he would recover you of your leprosy of sin! 2 Kings v. 3.

But say you, how know I this? I answer, the thing is sure and certain. When Jesus was upon earth, it is said of him that he healed all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people, Matt. iv. 23. And if in the days of his flesh he was thus gracious, surely he will not be less so in the day of his power. His state indeed is changed, but not his nature; his love is the same, and his power the same: his arm is not shortened, that he cannot save; neither is his ear grown heavy, that he cannot hear: for he is still and ever must be Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, Heb. xiii. 8.

And do you not remember how instant Jesus was upon every occasion, when upon earth, to fly to the relief of the sick and sorrowful! When the centurion came to Jesus for his servant that was in a palsy, Jesus immediately said, I will come and heal him. And when the leper only said to Jesus, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean, Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean; and immediately his leprosy was cleansed, Matt. viii. 2, 3, 5, 7. So ready and so willing is this kind and compassionate Lord to heal and comfort his afflicted ones, that it is only for the wretched and needy to cry to him (for he is always within call) and he is with them in a moment. Yea, he saith to himself, it shall come

to pass, that before my people call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear, Isa. lxv. 24. And another scripture saith, therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him, Isa. xxx. 18.

Neither is this all. For as the Lord Jesus is thus ready and willing to save the lost, and even to seek them before they seek him, so is it blessed to consider that all he takes in hand he is sure to heal; never was it known from the beginning of the world to this hour, that Jesus ever failed in a single instance, or even dismissed a single soul uncured. Oh, no; that is impossible: he is too wise to be mistaken, and too successful to miscarry; he can and will save to the uttermost all that come to God by him.

Shall I go further? Yes! for there is another sweet feature of character in the Lord Jesus as the great Physician of his church and people, which ought to be known and highly valued; namely, that he doth what no earthly physician can do; he maketh the case of all his suffering people his own, and feels for them more than they feel for themselves. Most blessedly was it said of him by the prophet, that in all their afflictions he was afflicted. Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses, Isa. lxiii. 9. Matt. viii. 17. What an encouraging thought is this to every exercised suffering child of God! Such an one may say, Jesus knows what my feelings are by his own; he knows what my trials and temptations are, for he hath borne the same. And hence God the Holy Ghost makes this the foundation for encouragement to go to him upon all occasions of sorrow. For it is said of him, in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted, Heb. ii. 18. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with

the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore (saith the apostle) come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, Heb. iv. 15, 16.

Is there any thing wanting to finish the relation concerning this lovely and all-loving Saviour? Surely there can need nothing more. And yet it should be added, that if Jesus be neglected, there can be found health in none beside. Try whatever else you may, all must fail. For there is salvation in no other, neither is there any other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved, Acts iv. 12.

And as Jesus waits for no recommendation, no merit in the persons of those he heals, so all his blessings are the sole result of his own rich and free sovereign grace. He is gracious, because he will be gracious: and he will have compassion on whom he will have compassion, Exod. xxxiii. 19. Rom. ix. 15. If there be any thing that can be said to recommend one more than another to the Lord Jesus, it is in cases of the greatest need, and where there is a sense of the greatest undeservings. The soul most buffeted by Satan, shall be most defended by Christ. The lamb of his fold most torn, shall be first healed, and lay the closest in his bosom. So that the poor, and more wretched of his people, shall be most welcome to Jesus.

Are these things so? Is there any such balm in Gilead? Is there this Almighty Physician there? Doth Jesus indeed receive all that come to God by him? Is he so ready; so near at hand; so wise that he cannot err; so compassionate that he cannot but be gracious; so tender-hearted that he makes all the cases of his people his own; so successful in the cure that not a single case he takes in hand can ever fail; and so generous that he cures all without money and without price: come hither, then, every poor, wretched, and

broken-hearted sinner; come ye that are maimed, and halt, and blind; yea, in the most desperate cases of soul, come to Jesus; for he saith himself, come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, Matt. xi. 28, 29. Thousands and tens of thousands now in glory, were once wretched as you now are, and found redemption in his blood. And all the church upon earth can testify the same.

Precious Lord Jesus! add one blessing more to all this bounty; and incline the heart of all that hear those gracious welcomes among thy people (and my poor heart also) to come at thy bidding. And do thou, dearest Lord, bring home all thy diseased and sin-sick family to thyself, in that blessed city of thine, where the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick; for the people that dwell therein, shall be forgiven their iniquity, Isa. xxxiii. 24.

I have but one service more to perform in this Second Book for Children, namely, the one proposed in the title-page; to bring our youth and even our little children (as far as human instruction can lead) into an early acquaintance with themselves and the plague of their own heart. And this work I purpose to accomplish, as the Lord shall be pleased to enable me, in a few lessons. May the Lord give a blessing to it, and thereby fulfil that sweet promise to his people, all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, Isa. liv. 12.

### LESSON I.

The scriptures of God with one full consent insist upon the corrupt state of our nature.

Thus the Lord himself is said to have looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. And they were all gone aside; they were altogether become filthy; there was none that did good, no not one, Psalm xiv. 2, 3.

And in tracing this universal corruption to its source, we are told that it was induced by the transgression of our first parent. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passeth upon all men, for that all have sinned, Rom. v. 12.

And hence, one sacred writer saith, that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? Jer. xvii. 9. And another saith, that God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth; and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, Gen. vi. 5. And another saith, that foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, Prov. xxii. 15. And the whole with one voice declare, that the heart of the sons of men is full of evil; and madness is in their heart while they live, Eccles. ix. 3.

Let our youthful reader pause over this solemn view of our fallen state by nature, and which he will not fail to remember is wholly taken from scripture, and then let him go on to a further confirmation from the same authority.

LESSON II.

The scriptures of God, which so plainly and so fully declare the solemn truth of man's fallen state, do as plainly and fully declare the sure effects of it in our whole nature. Let us attend to some few of the effects as they appear in all men.

It is in consequence of this original corruption of our nature that all the faculties of our mind are disordered. Our understanding is darkened. So that as the scripture beareth witness, there is none that understandeth; none that seeketh after God, Rom. iii. 11. Our wills and affections are depraved. So that no man by nature is disposed to love God; ye will not come to me, (saith the Lord Jesus) that ye might have life, John v. 40.

The mind, which, in a state of uncorrupt nature,

would in all its passions be delighted with things pure and amiable; are, by reason of the fall, in constant rebellion, and in the pursuit of things of a contrary tendency. And so little disposed are we, while in a state of unrenewed nature, to seek after the first and best of all objects of delight, that it is impossible without grace to detain the mind, even when before the Lord, from running after the vanities and follies of life in continued imagination.

Our memories are so much engaged in what is evil, and so little disposed to what is good, that, like a leaky vessel, we retain nothing that we hear, by which the soul might be profited. But on the part of corruption what is communicated through any of the avenues of information, by the eyes or ears, as so many purveyors to the mind; these fasten with such as hold fast on the corrupt part of nature to which they are communicated, that through life the earliest impressions perhaps are never worn out.

In short, the whole nature is corrupt, and, as the prophet speaks, the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint; and from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it, Isa. i. 5, 6. And hence the holy scriptures make use of many strong figures and images to describe our sinful nature. It is called sin itself, and simply not that only which is outward in the life, but inward in the whole nature. It is called indwelling sin; which, like the root in a wall, sends forth its buddings, and which if cropt off, still the root remains. It is called the body of sin, because the several breakings out are only the members of it; which however various they may appear, are all from one and the same body. It is called the old man of sin; because it is derived by generation from the first man, and is as old as our nature since his fall. And hence, though all men do not manifest in the same way and manner by

outward actions one and the same transgression, as all men do not in the body die of the same disease, yet the seeds of every sin are in every heart: and that they do not break out alike in all, is not from any difference in nature, but from the restraints of grace. Our Lord hath drawn the portrait of the human heart to the full length, when he saith, out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things (saith the Lord Jesus) come from within and defile the man, Mark vii. 21. Let our youthful reader ponder well this account, and then let him prosecute the subject further.

LESSON III.

It will be proper now to inquire into the fact itself from the experience and testimony of mankind. We have seen what the word of God hath said on this sad subject; let us next hear what holy men of old and under the inspiration of God have added, by way of confirmation to the same melancholy truth from their own histories.

I shall not lead my young pupil by the hand to get information on this ground from notorious characters of sin, whose lives were remarkable for the outbreakings of their indwelling corruptions. But I would call forth to evidence on this subject some of the best and holiest of men, which the world ever knew, and let their confessions of themselves, when taught by the Spirit of God, decide the matter.

Job, the patriarch, is declared by the Lord himself to be a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil, Job i. 8. Now hear what this faithful servant of the Lord saith of himself.

If I justify myself (saith Job) mine own mouth shall condemn me. If I say I am perfect, it should also

prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, I would despise my life. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," Job ix. 20, 21. and chap. xlii. 6.

Hear another of the Lord's faithful ones, even David, the man after God's own heart.

Have mercy (saith David) upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me, Ps. li. 1, 2, 3, 5.

Hear a third, even Isaiah. Woe is me, (said the prophet) for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips; and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts! Isa. vi. 5. As if the sight of the Lord taught the prophet to behold his own uncleanness, which, however before might not have been seen as it really was, yet now was seen and felt most sensibly.

Hear a fourth, even the great apostle Paul. I know (saith Paul) that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. And under a deep sense of the remains of an indwelling corruption, even after a work of grace had been wrought in his heart, he crieth out, Oh! wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death! Rom. vii. 18, 24.

Now then, let this view of the complaints of the best and holiest men the world ever knew, be laid together in confirmation of the word of God; and then say, is not the nature of man universally considered in a fallen, sinful state?

Will it be said, that there are many amiable and lovely qualities still left in the human mind, amidst the effects of the fall; and that we behold some, as different from others in this respect, as though they were of a different nature. I answer, it is very true

that there are some apparently gentle and kind, and affectionate, with other qualities, which tend to endear them to our hearts. But then it should be remembered that such effects are more the result of outward causes, than from any real difference inward. The tree, that in every species is the same, must produce the same fruit, if all the other circumstances are corresponding. The seed which is of one stalk, be that seed what it may, if brought into the same situation can produce no other grain than its own. A child may by restraints of fear, or through the force of education, be kept back from numberless transgressions which others fall into where those retraints are not known. The tiger, when young and taken from the den of its dam, hath been taught to be more docile than one at large in the woods. But let it be remembered, it is still a tiger, and if occasion offered, the ferocity of the tiger would surely break out.

We may allow every thing that men wish to have allowed, to what they call amiable, and gentle, and lovely qualities in the human mind, but after all, they only serve to shew somewhat of the remains of what our nature once was, rather than what it now is. They are like the broken fragments of some beautiful temple which was once fair and splendid, but is now destroyed. We just see the tokens of the arches and pillars thrown down. But the whole manifests the ruin which hath taken place.

LESSON IV.

Having now, in the preceding lessons sufficiently, I hope, proved the fact itself of our universally fallen nature, it will be high time to bring the reasoning home, from the history of others to our own. Perhaps, my youthful reader, hath all along been considering the subject as one not immediately connected with himself. But it will be his mercy to be undeceived in this particular. The argument of the apostle on this point

includes every son and daughter of Adam; for speaking of the sinfulness of others, he saith, what then? are we better than they? no; in no wise. For we have before proved both jews and gentiles that they are under sin, Rom. iii. 9.

In children, and especially little children, there are certain corruptions, to which, from the want of age, they are not in a capacity of perpetrating. Of consequence the seeds of such sins, though in the heart, are not capable of sending forth their baneful fruit; but like the productions of the earth must be restrained until the season. Of some, however, which are congenial to the apprehension of the child, there are proofs enough to manifest the fallen state of man even in children; and such as are visible from the earliest season.

The psalmist speaking of the subject, saith, that the wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies, Psalm lviii. 3. As the first lie told in the world worked upon the heart of our first mother, so there hath been a natural disposition in all her children to conceal our faults by denying them. And as lying is among the natural sins of childhood, though unhappily not confined to that age; so passions, and not unfrequently very strong and ungovernable, break out from our infancy.

Pride, in all its train of consequences, is an universal corruption of our fallen nature; so much so, that it not only manifests itself in desires after dress, and haughtiness to those we are taught to consider as our inferiors, but even in little acts of charity, there is a great deal of pride mingled with what we give, by which we would shew how good we are, and what good hearts we possess.

Envy is another blossom and fruit of the deadly root of sin in our nature. Oh! how often may this be discovered, even in little children, when they see any finer

in dress than themselves, or if they hear them commended for any thing in which they are said to excel.

Disobedience to parents! This is a very common corruption in proof of the fall, and which more or less is manifested by all children. I am limiting my observations to the case of children, and therefore do not stay only to remark, how frequently the rebellion shewn to parents while children ripens into contempt and neglect of their parents in old age!

I might enumerate several other propensities of the human mind, which mark even little children's tempers, in proof of the fallen state of mind; such, I mean, as anger, obstinacy, ill-will, sullenness, cruelty to animals, and the like; which send forth their buddings even from the womb. But enough hath been shewn. I would only add, and insist upon it in proof of the doctrine above all; an universal aversion to the knowledge and love of God, to the restraints of the Lord's day, and to family and public worship. Children may, and perhaps will, be pleased to go to church to shew their fine clothes; but there is a general reluctance to every thing of a solemn nature. A fondness for play, and an aversion to all restraint from the ruling characters of all our children!

LESSON V.

I have but one lesson more to detain my young reader with on this most interesting subject; and for the introduction of which, all that went before, with all the designs of instruction are intended to minister; namely, to bring my little charge savingly acquainted with the person, work, grace, and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And if the Lord the Spirit hath been your teacher in what is here offered, in bringing you into an acquaintance with the plague of your own heart; if the Lord the Spirit hath made you sensible of the lost and hapless state of your fallen nature, you will need no in-

ducements from me to seek the knowledge of, and acquaintance with, the Lord of life and glory.

All the bible is full of nothing else but of Jesus and his great salvation. And all the ends and designs of instruction is to make his people acquainted with him, whom truly to know is life everlasting.

I only add a prayer, therefore, and beg to close up all the contents of this Second Book for the instruction of our little children with the same; that the Lord will do by all his little ones as is said of Timothy; who from a child had known the holy scriptures which was able to make him wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. The Lord so commission this feeble work to his praise and his children's joy, that many an heart may find cause to bless him, crying out with the apostles, now thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. Amen.

## VII.

LESSONS FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, AS USED IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL, ESTABLISHED IN THE PARISH OF CHARLES, IN PLYMOUTH, CALLED, THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH.

The teachers of children in the first principles of education, would do well, at the very first entrance of learning, to meet their infant charge, and soften every path that might threaten to obstruct their way to knowledge. And there is nothing more important than to furnish them with right notions of the great importance of using accent and emphasis; the raising or depressing the voice, in reading, as the subject may render necessary. I would have children, yea, the smallest of children taught betimes, as soon as they are advanced, to join their letters together, and are enabled to read short sentences, to know that reading differs nothing from conversation, unless that in the former there are no responses from another person, as in the latter: but, in order that the sense of the subject read may be always preserved, they should be taught to follow the same method in questions proposed, or any way given, as if there were more speakers than one. And the children in schools ought continually to be reminded, that their reading should be, as their talking with one another is; and in the same ordinary and familiar way, which consists very much in questions and answers; much of what they read, being in the way of interrogation, and much in a way of answer; hence the modulation of their voice should be framed accordingly. And if this mode was uniformly adopted, and closely followed up by the teachers of schools in the early stages of instruction, the plan would soon become so familiar, as totally to defeat that

droning in schools of which all complain, but few have attempted to remedy.

I have found more difficulty in this part of the system of education, than in any other whatever. In almost all schools there is a general disposition to monotony. When children read in classes, and go through their lessons alternately, in a way of what is called versing, the note which the elder scholar happens to strike off with, will be sure to be echoed through the whole class—as horses in a team follow their leader.

And from custom, this is at length become so habitual, that even when advanced in learning, the lure is seldom wholly lost. I have known some children, in the highest classes, so perfect in their lessons, as not to miss a word, or speak it incorrectly; and yet from using no cadence, when they had finished, they might very properly have been asked, whether they had designed to sing or read their lessons?

The teachers who will condescend to adopt the plan here proposed, and which is exemplified in a few lessons from holy scripture, by way of illustration, will be pleased to observe, that in each lesson, the subject is divided into four distinct parts, as if there were four distinct speakers. The first part contains the subject itself, taken from holy scripture, and chiefly historical; and may be considered as the statement of certain divine truths, unquestionable and true. The second, is a subject raised upon it, and expressed in a way of inquiry; not, as if questioning the things themselves, but rather as if desiring to obtain more information concerning them, and from their being so highly important. The third part is supposed to follow up the same subject; and from being now very highly impressed with the importance of the things treated of, expresseth much pleasure mingled with surprise and joy at the relation. And the fourth, forms the conclusion to

the whole, containing suitable and becoming acknowledgments to the Lord, for the gracious revelations he hath been pleased to make of himself, on these divine truths: and desiring to possess at all times a grateful and lively sense of the same, in the mind, and understanding, and conscience.

The teachers of schools will observe, that what is here offered on the subject, takes only a portion of the book of Genesis. More may be added hereon, from the other parts of scripture, if required. And the teachers will not fail to remark also, that as the statement here given, and the observations here made, are such only as the higher classes in any school can be supposed competent to enter into; they are designed especially for their use, and for the exercise of the elder scholars in every school. But then they are designed to be daily used in the hearing even of the least of the little ones, beginning to learn. For they will imbibe proper notions therefrom for their improvement, as they advance in learning; and soon discover that this mode is adopted to prevent droning throughout the whole school, be the class what it may.

The compiler of this little work, (for the office can hardly claim an higher rank) ventures to hope that under the Lord's blessing this feeble attempt may be rendered useful to a yet higher purpose, than the title-page hath proposed. If the disagreeable monotony be cured hereby, surely the sense of the things expressed will be better understood; and from the Lord's blessing upon it, the youthful mind may be led to a clearer apprehension of the things of God, which are freely given to us of God.

## LESSON I.

### *ON THE CREATION.*

### PART THE FIRST.

To be read by the elder scholar, in the hearing of the whole school.

HOLY SCRIPTURE.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.—And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.—And God said, let there be light; and there was light.—And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.—And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.—And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind; and God saw that it was good.—And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.—So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them.—And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.—And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day, Gen. i. 1—31.

[The reader will observe that only part of this first chapter is here printed. It would swell this little work, to have done more, beyond the size and price intended. But the teachers would do well, if time favours, to direct the elder scholar to read the whole chapter.]

PART THE SECOND.

To be read by the second elder scholar, as before, in the audience of the whole school.

OBSERVATIONS.

And are these among the principal leading points in the scripture account of God's works in creation? Yes! And was it thus, that in the beginning of God's ways and works, when going forth in acts of creation, God graciously manifested himself to his creatures? Yes. And was it all eternity before, in which God, in his Trinity of persons, subsisted in a way and manner peculiarly his own, different and distinct from all his creatures, dwelling in inconceivable glory, and holiness, and blessedness, in his own eternal self-existence? Yes. For so the scriptures have revealed. Shall we not pause then at the very entrance on this holy book of God, and bless God for what he is in himself: for what he hath done: and for what he is doing: and for what he will do, in his acts of grace and love to his creatures? Yes. Surely every one that hears it, or reads it, if his mind be under the influence of grace, will join the same sacred song which John heard in vision, in the church, saying, thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created, Rev. iv. 11.

But will you allow me to recall your attention, with my own, to some few of those leading particulars here recorded? Yes! What a sublimity there is in the very manner of relation here given! And what a beautiful simplicity at the same time runs through the whole! Do observe with me, the sovereignty, the order, the regularity, the process, the Almighty God was pleased to manifest, while carrying on those works of creation!

And do you not admire with me the striking man-

ner of expression, when it is said, that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth: that is, God, which according to other scriptures, comprehends the whole persons in the Godhead? Most sublime to this statement, is that verse of the psalmist, where it is said, by the word of the Lord were the heavens made: and all the host of them by the breath (or Spirit) of his mouth, Psalm xxxiii. 6. I stay not to make quotations from other scriptures in proof, but only by reference.—See John i. 1—10. Eph. iii 9. Colos. i. 16. Heb. i. 2. Indeed we need not go out of this chapter for a further testimony than what is here recorded, concerning the formation of our nature, in the council of the Holy Three in One at the twenty-sixth verse, where it is said,—Let us make man in our image, after our likeness!

I must not indulge by a train of observations on this scriptural testimony of God's works in creation; but methinks I could ask a thousand questions of interest and delight on such a subject. Are there not numberless beauties in every verse as we pass on in the relation? Did God form the whole out of the formless deep? Did God the Spirit move upon the face of the waters, when he said,—let there be light; and it was light? And was it not, yea, is it not, in every instance, the same God the Spirit in the new creation of grace, as in this old creation of nature, which commands the light to shine out of darkness, that shines in the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ? 2 Cor. iv. 6. Did God, as is here stated, form day and night; and thus make that sweet variety of seasons, which constitutes so much for comfort in the life of the whole creation of God? Did God cause his wisdom as well as his power to be manifested in congregating the waters into one place; and at the same time causing the dry land of the earth to appear; the former, the suited habitation

for the fishes of the sea, and the latter, the proper climate for man and beast to dwell in? And when God had thus formed and arranged all with such an infinite order and precision, commanding a blessing upon all, and a fruitfulness upon all; did God take a survey of the works of his hands, and pronounce over the whole his divine approbation; saying, and behold it was very good? With what delight then, ought the intelligent part of the creation to contemplate all the ways and works of God; and to say with one of old, all thy works shall praise thee, O Lord: and thy saints shall bless thee! Psalm cxlv. 10.

PART THE THIRD.

To be read by the third elder scholar, as before, in the hearing of the whole school.

OBSERVATIONS.

Will you allow me to raise my observations, also, on this most interesting portion of the word of God, opening, as it doth, with the relation both of the whole creation of God, and particularly with reference to our nature? It is blessed, yea, very blessed, for our minds to be brought acquainted with the first beginning of man: and to see what our nature was, when in the days of primitive innocency we were formed in the person of our first father, holy, and without sin before God.

You have just read the close of the first chapter of Genesis, which is folded up with expressing the divine approbation of the whole. And in the following chapter, the sacred historian prosecutes the subject with stating the special tokens of God's favour on our nature. The sacred words are;—and the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul, Gen. ii. 7.

Here, at this relation, I could propose numberless questions to edification and comfort! I would ask con-

cerning our nature, (for in this respect every man is a world of wonders to himself), am I thus allied to heaven and earth? and am I, by virtue of being taken from the dust of the earth, earthy, and no less in the Lord God breathing into my nostrils the breath of life, am I become a living soul? Such, it may be answered, was man in his original state, in the instance of our first parent. And are his posterity included in the same?

But let us not stop here. We are further taught in this same chapter, while the sacred historian is prosecuting the subject, that the Lord God not only distinguished our first parent from all the inferior creation, by breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, by which man became a living soul; but that he further distinguished him, by placing him in paradise, where grew the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. What am I to conclude from such a relation of divine goodness, but that the Lord God had done every thing for the welfare and happiness of our nature? Could I have been supposed to have questioned our first father, might I not have asked him, in the words the Lord used upon another occasion, and demanded, what could have been done more to my vineyard, (saith the Lord) that I have not done in it? Isa. v. 4.

In relation to this tree of knowledge of good and evil, which God placed in the midst of the garden, a test or pledge of his obedience and thankfulness, much will arise to our observation as the history proceeds. And although we already without anticipation, know the result of this prohibition, yet every principle of reason, as well as revelation, concur in acknowledging both the divine authority, and the divine justice, while we read the solemn scripture. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in

the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die, Gen ii. 16, 17.

PART THE FOURTH.

To be read by the fourth elder scholar, in the hearing of the whole school.

OBSERVATIONS.

Here then, in closing up the first lesson on this most interesting and beautiful account in holy scripture of God's works in creation, I would beg all that hear it, or read it, to pause over it, and ponder well the gracious contents.

And first:—If it be demanded, the motive in the divine mind, prompting to such acts of grace? The answer is direct. Nothing out of God himself, could have operated to this purpose. The supreme glory is the first and ultimate end of all things, according to that scripture:—The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil, Prov. xvi. 4. But then let it be duly considered what glory it is, that becomes the result of such manifestations? Not his essential glory: for in the essence and being of his nature, there is not a possibility either of increase or decrease. It can neither be augmented or diminished. I might as well attempt, by my puny arm, to direct the whirlwind's force, or swell the noise of the thunder by my voice, or add to the ocean's fulness by the drop of the bucket, as to suppose the glory of God in the almightiness of his nature can receive accessions from any cause whatever. No! The manifestation of the divine goodness is referred by the scriptures themselves unto this conclusion; namely, to the praise of the glory of his grace, Eph. i. God's grace, like all God's other perfections, are standards of character, which like himself are unchangeable. But if God will make known the exceeding riches of his grace, towards the objects of his divine favour, then shall it be to the praise of the glory of that grace. And here it is the divine glory is made manifest in those sovereign acts we have been reviewing of creation.

Secondly.—What grace, yea, what exceeding riches of grace, hath God in his Trinity of persons manifested, in thus going forth in acts of creation? Not, as hath been already shewn, to add to his greatness, for that is impossible; but to call into existence, and to raise up innumerable beings, to make them happy: not that God might receive, but that God might give! not to bring to the ocean of his own blessedness, what is already too full to have more, but to impart, and by emanations from himself, to open his hand, (as the scriptures beautifully express it) and satisfy the desires of every living thing, Psalm cxlv. 16. And lastly, to add no more; it is not the smallest consideration in this blissful subject, that God should have graciously condescended to make a revelation of these divine acts, and by the scriptures of inspiration bring his people acquainted with the divine intention and his holy will for their happiness. We are told, that when at the creation, the Lord God had finished the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, Job xxxviii. 8. And how ought our nature in the persons of the Lord's chosen, who are thereby brought into a nearer union and affinity with God than the angels, to stand as on the sea of glass, having the harps of God; and to sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints! Rev. xv. 2, 3.

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LESSON II.

*ON THE FALL OF MAN.*

PART THE FIRST.

To be read by the elder scholar in the hearing of the whole school.

HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said

unto the woman, yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?—And the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden.—But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.—And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die.—For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.—And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her: and he did eat.—And the eyes of them both were opened; and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons, Gen. iii. 1—7.

PART THE SECOND.

To be read by the second elder scholar, in the hearing of the whole school.

OBSERVATIONS.

What a change is here made in the nature of man! Looking at our first parents, and beholding the vast alteration of circumstances, from what was once fair to what is now become so foul, and so filthy, we may exclaim in the words of the prophet, how is the gold become dim! How is the most fine gold changed! Lam. iv. 1.

But what am I to suppose from this scriptural relation? Nay, there can be but one conclusion. When God had finished the works of creation, it is said that he saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good. But by man's disobedience, he and all his posterity lost all their creation purity, and their whole nature became foul, filthy, degraded, and full of inherent evil. The Holy Ghost by Paul relates the awful history, when he saith, sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men; for that all have sinned, Rom. v. 12.

But let me ask, according to the statement of holy scripture; was it from the serpent's beguilement? Yes! It was the old serpent which became the tempter, and as our Lord described him, he was a murderer from the beginning. But was not Adam, from the holiness of his nature in which God created him, able to resist the temptations of the enemy? Yes! Adam certainly had no corruption within; neither ought he to have regarded temptation from without: and had he attended to the command of God, instead of listening to the suggestions of the enemy, the arguments of the serpent must have been futile. But it appears from the history that he did not; and from being a mutable creature, in the moment of temptation he fell, pulled down the creation on his guilty head, and involved his whole posterity in the ruins.

And what was the great bait of the enemy, by which he became successful? I answer, pride. Our deluded parents, tempted to believe that by the transgression they should become as great as God, they broke through the divine fence of God's holy law, and at once became sinful, and every faculty polluted and depraved. But did the enemy use any other stratagem for the accomplishment of his vile purpose? He needed no other. This was the master-piece of Satan. And the first act which the enemy played off to accomplish his purpose, was the insinuation, that what God had said, God would not fulfil: ye shall not surely die, (said he) for God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be open; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Children of the school! all of you attend to this. Here was the first lie ever told in this our world. And observe, by whom told? Even by the devil. Who but must tremble ever after, at the very thought of telling a falsehood, when we discover who the author of all falsehoods is; and the awful consequence to which all falsehoods lead. Our Lord hath stated this

in so striking a manner, as well merits our closest attention. Speaking to the carnal jews, Jesus said, ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it, John viii. 44.

But methinks a thousand questions arise out of this history. It is said that when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband, with her, and he did eat! Were her senses beguiled? Could that be good for food, which proved to be poison? Could that be pleasant to the eyes, which was calculated to make her blind? And could the tree be desired, with its fruit, to make one wise, which was sure to produce blindness, and ignorance, and death for ever? And is it not so now in the thousand blandishments of human life? Are not all our temptations gilded over? What a subject doth the fall of man open for the most profound meditation? And how astonishing is it to behold the train of evils, from generation to generation, which this one awful event hath induced? And is it not to this must be traced all the miseries of private life, and all the calamities of public bodies, throughout the world? Yes! Every heart-ache and head-ache from Adam to the present hour; every perfidy, baseness, and cruelty of man to man; every sick and sorrowful chamber throughout the earth; and all the hospitals whose walls reverberate from couch to couch with groans; the multitudes of dying and the dead; all have their origin from this one source;—sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men; for that all have sinned, Rom. v. 12.

But what then, hath this fall of man involved in it

the afflictions of the whole race, so that none is exempt? What am I to think of infants? Are they involved in the condemnation of original sin? Yes! An apostle tells us, that death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, Rom. v. 14. And do we not behold the same effects now? Do not numberless little children come into the world, as if merely to breathe, and go out of it again; and not unfrequently, in pain and suffering? Yea, so universal is the sway and empire of death, that millions have died since Adam's transgression! neither is there one alive of the whole human race, that lived an hundred, or an hundred and fifty years since! Is this the lot of all? And am I, and are you implicated in the general destruction? What an awful event must have been the fall of man? Well may it be said, as by one of old in the contemplation—

——"But have I now seen death?—
Is this the way I must return to native dust?
O sight of terror, foul, and ugly to behold!
Horrid to think! how horrible to feel?—MILTON.

PART THE THIRD.

To be read by the third elder scholar, as before, in the audience of the whole school.

OBSERVATIONS.

And was this the instant effect of the transgression of our first parents, that the eyes of them both were opened? Yes! But what am I to understand by their opened eyes? Was the effect as the serpent promised, to be as gods? Oh! no, alas! the very reverse. It was to see themselves more like devils. They felt they had lost their original purity, in which their bountiful Creator had formed them; and in lieu of it, had debased themselves, (as scripture expresses it) even to hell, Isa. lvii. 9. They were now the subjects of every corrupt passion and affection; and their eyes were opened only to behold their vast misery without the least possibility of repairing it. But were there not

other awful effects involved in this apostacy from God? Yes! Our wretched parents may be said, by this foul act of disobedience, to have pulled down the whole creation of God in condemnation upon their guilty heads. Is it not said, that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now? Yes! And did not some dreadful change take place from their transgression, in all the circumstances around them? Yes! Did not boisterous winds and storms, and the like, indicate the great change in nature? Yes! Eden was no longer to them a paradise. And did not the brute creation revolt, and become rebellious against our first parents, as they had revolted from, and became rebellious to God? Yes! The ferocity of all creatures testified the vast change; their nature became savage. And not only did they cease to obey our parents, who while in their innocency were the deputed lords of all creatures; but their nature became savage to each other. The wolf and the lamb which, while man retained his innocency, were in perfect amity, and fed together, now manifested the contrary disposition. And never could an alteration from this universal ruin take place, until, by sovereign grace, under the gospel dispensation, the Lord himself repaired the desolations of many generations, and restored perfect order among all the works of God. Then we are told, speaking in a figurative way, the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child (that is, the regenerated child, new born in grace, and weaned from nature's corruptions, see Psalm cxxxi. 2. shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall

not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea, Isa. xi. 6, 7, 8, 9.

And were these among the awful and tremendous consequences of man's fall? Yes! Fallen from all that was holy, and pure, and amiable, in his nature; the Lord saw, as he himself testified of it, that the wickedness of man was great in the earth; and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, Gen. vi. 5. Man became a captive to sin, a captive to Satan, a captive to divers lusts, a captive to his own guilty conscience, a captive to the fear of death. And what added to the horrible guilt, and infinitely exceeded all, his mind now became wholly carnal, and full of enmity against God, Rom. viii. 7. And was this man's portrait after the fall? Yes! Was it so then? Yes! And is it so now? Yes! in every son and daughter of Adam, until by grace the Lord hath wrought a change, all are alike guilty before God: and it is the Lord only that can deliver from the powers of darkness, and translate us into the kingdom of his dear Son, Colos. i. 13.

But the history proceeds. And they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons! What did our unhappy parents mean by this flimsy covering? Could they suppose that they could hereby conceal their shame from God? What though the fig-tree leaves are large and umbrageous, what warmth could they afford to their bodies; and much less, what concealment could such things be to the nakedness of their souls? Children! do you not see how senseless, as well as sinful, our first parents were become? And shall not the relation of it put a cry in every one of your youthful hearts, Lord! keep us in thy faith, and fear, lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, and we become

hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, Heb. iii. 12, 13.

PART THE FOURTH.

To be read by the fourth elder scholar, as before, in the hearing of the whole school.

OBSERVATIONS.

You have stated the strong and unalterable precept of the Lord; and you have shewn from the same scripture the sad and awful breach of it by our first parents, and the trembling judgment hanging over their heads in consequence thereof. Let us pause over it; for it is an awful relation: and we are all too deeply interested in it, to part from it too hastily away. It will be well to observe, the shame and guilt which instantly appeared in the conduct of both our unhappy parents, the moment of their transgression. We are told, that the eyes of them both were opened: not to behold themselves as they had been in their former innocency; not to find what the enemy had promised, that they should be as gods, but to discover themselves as tainted with the devil, and to be filled with shame and horror. What an awful change! to what a state were they at once reduced!

It is an affecting account, which the Lord himself hath given, by one of his servants the prophets, of this inconceivable change: and were it not for the vast interest we feel in it, the language in which it is expressed would captivate our hearts. The Lord speaking under the character of Tyrus, thus describes the primitive beauty and holiness of our nature before the fall; and the reverse which took place by the fall. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God, every precious stone was thy covering; the sardius, topaz, and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was

prepared in thee, in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee, Ezek. xxviii. 12—15. I need not call upon you to attend to this affecting narrative, for it cannot fail to arrest the earnest regard of all that hear it; because our whole nature is alike involved, both in the sin and in the condemnation: for as holy scripture bears testimony, we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God. But I would desire, that the striking particulars in it may be impressed with suitable reverence and godly fear upon your minds, as I pray they may upon mine own.

And first, we learn from hence, that we have an enemy, malignant and cruel, which from his nature and spiritual concealment, finds entrance into our minds unperceived by us, when, serpent-like, he creeps in and worms himself there without our consciousness. Hence the apostle expressed his apprehension for the church, when he said, I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ, 2 Cor. xi. 3.

And secondly:—Let us not fail to observe the subtilty of this arch-fiend: the stratagem by which he accomplished his vile purpose, was under the mask of doing good. Ye shall not die, (said he) for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil, Gen. iii. 5. Hence we are taught, in the same scripture as expressed the apostle's jealousy, how to be on our guard against the more refined temptations of Satan, who never more effectually deceives,

than when he is apparently transformed into an angel of light, 2 Cor. xi. 14.

And thirdly:—From the parley which our poor deceived mother admitted to this foe, we learn the danger of all intercourse with evil, and the workers of evil.

It is to walk on dangerous ground. It is to handle dangerous weapons. It is to take up noxious animals in our hands, when we venture to hold conversation with the unfruitful works of darkness. For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty, 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 17, 18.

Fourthly:—It will be our mercy in the instructions we derive from this scripture, if we look for grace from God to set the Lord always before us, and to keep constantly in view an holy reverence for all the divine commands. The precepts given to our first parents were all of the negative kind. Thou shalt not eat of the tree of life. Thou shalt not touch it, lest ye die. And such for the most part are the commandments given for our obedience to the Lord. You that are the children of our school, are continually taught the same. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. And while we seek grace from the Lord, to honour the Lord in the obedience to his commandments; we are taught to expect the Lord's blessing upon us.

Let me only detain you with one short view more of this holy scripture. It will be helpful in the preparing

us for the further prosecution of the sacred history, in the next part of the narrative. Let us behold the several characters as they stood before the Lord, arraigned at his almighty bar, for the breach of his divine law. Behold our first father and mother, under the conscious sense of their dreadful transgression; trembling as they stood, and justly expecting the sentence pronounced upon their apostacy to have been executed speedily. Behold the accursed enemy, also, waiting his tremendous judgment from the hands of the offended Majesty of God. And may we not suppose that the holy angels who looked on at the first formation of man, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, were also present to be the witnesses of man's foul apostacy and rebellion. Silent, no doubt they were, and astonished at the wonderful change in the whole face of nature. For when man rose up against God, the beasts of the earth rose in rebellion against man. And we are told that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now. The Lord open to us the subsequent part of this history, and open our hearts to the proper apprehension of it, that according to that promise, and the children of God shall be all taught of God!

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LESSON III.

*OF THE LORD'S JUDGMENT ON THE FALL.*

PART THE FIRST.

To be read by the elder scholar, in the hearing of the whole school.

HOLY SCRIPTURE.

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden, in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.—And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, where art thou?—And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden,

and I was afraid, because I was naked ; and I hid myself. —And he said, who told thee that thou wast naked ? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat ?—And the man said, the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.—And the Lord God said unto the woman, what is this that thou hast done ? And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat, Gen. iii. 7—13.

PART THE SECOND.

To be read by the second elder scholar, in the hearing of the whole school.

OBSERVATIONS.

In order to enter into the full apprehension of those solemn events, which took place immediately on the transgression of our first parents in the garden of Eden, we must figure to our imagination the guilty culprits, waiting for what would be the event of their awful delinquency. And conceive, if it be possible, what an alarm sounded through all the chambers of their guilty consciences, when they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden, in the cool of the day ? That voice which they had never heard before, but with unspeakable delight, now becoming the greatest of all terrors. And I pray you to remark the expedient they attempted to get from it. We are told that they sought to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord amidst the trees of the garden. Vain attempt ! Oh ! how must sin have darkened their minds already, when it is among the distinguishing attributes of God to behold all things in heaven and in earth. Let the children of our school remember this ! You can conceal nothing from his all-seeing eye ; for all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do, Heb. iv. 13.

But how think ye that Adam and his wife trembled, when God called to Adam, and said unto him, where art thou ? The Lord God knew where he was, and

called not for his information, but for Adam's reproach. Where art thou? What hast thou done? What is become of thee? Children! do not fail to observe the plan of the divine proceeding! And though, as the sacred history hereafter manifested, there was great grace and mercy intended to be shown to the guilty culprits, yet God begins with arraigning them, as he doth all sinners, at the bar of his justice.

And what was our first father's answer? Yea, what could he say, what ought he to have said, but the full acknowledgment of his guilt? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked. And had sin rendered the heart of our first parents so obdurate, as to offer this as a palliative for his conduct? Yes! And was he more alarmed at the *effect* of his sin in being naked, than in the *cause* itself of disobedience to God? Yes! And is not this the case of all sinners? Yes! For until by grace we are changed, we are more concerned for the *consequence* of sin than the *commission* of sin. Hence Cain exclaimed after his foul offence, and God's judgment upon it, My punishment is greater than I can bear, Gen. iv. 13. But when sin is felt exceeding sinful, and sovereign grace makes the sinner abhor himself for his offences, the sin of our nature is more dreaded than even the punishment. Hence, as in the case of David, his language through grace then was, mine iniquities are gone over my head; as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me, Psalm xxxviii. 4.

But the demand from the Lord is carried on. Adam is further questioned. Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And was it thus, that the Lord arraigned the sinner at the bar of his own conscience? Did the Lord make him to be his own accuser, and cause him to plead guilty be-

fore God? Yes! Adam was constrained by his own feelings so to do. The Lord God did not ask this question for his own information, but for the self-conviction of Adam. Hast thou eaten? said God. Yes! said our unhappy father. But then, as it is in the case of all his sinful posterity void of grace, who would lessen, if possible, their own guilt by laying the blame on others, Adam endeavoured to palm off his crime on the woman. Hast thou eaten, (said God) of what I said that thou shalt not eat? Yes! said he, I have; but it was the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

Let us pause here to observe the progress and boldness of sin. What! was it not enough that the man had dared to forget the reverence he owed his Maker, and to break through the fence of the divine law; but will he presume to charge his sin upon God? Yes! For this he indirectly did, when he said, the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. As much as to say, hadst thou not given me this woman, I should not have offended thee. So that the blame is thine, and not mine, and therefore you ought not to be offended. And is it possible that sin can so harden the heart? Yes! What to charge that upon God which belonged only to himself? Did Adam indeed mean it? Yes! there can be no doubt but that he did.

But let us proceed. Next comes the examination of the woman: what is this, saith the Lord God to her, what is this thou hast done? And observe the same follows in our first mother, as in our first father; she attempted to make a similar excuse for her crime, as he had done for his; for she said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. What colour of excuse was there in all this? How could our first mother think, that by talking of the beguilement of the great enemy of souls, she should throw all the blame from herself, and make

it chargeable on the enemy. Yet such for the most part is the conduct of all the children of the fallen race from that time to the present hour. If we can shift our transgressions from ourselves to others, and transfer our sins and infirmities with any plausibility of truth, from our own shoulders to those of our neighbours, the deceived heart for the moment finds a sensible gratification from it, and is deluded to say, peace, peace to himself, when there is no peace. And was this in the sin of our first mother? Yes! And did she really take shelter under such a false covering? Yes! Oh! how different the cry of him, who when through grace, and under a conscious sense of sin, and apprehensive that he never should be able either to know the extent of his sins, and to explore the whole resources of divine mercy, cried out in deep humiliation of soul, who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from my secret faults.

PART THE THIRD.

To be read by the third elder scholar in the hearing of the whole school.

OBSERVATIONS.

I have been attending to the subject itself with great apprehension. And while I feel my spiritual senses suitably exercised in the contemplation of the Lord's scrutiny, and the sinner's attempt at palliation, I connect with the view of this tribunal a great variety of circumstances, which, taken into the account, cannot fail, under the Lord, to add a further solemnity to the whole proceeding.

I figure to my imagination the several parties which we may suppose to have been present at the trial of our parents. No doubt the same angelic beings who took part in the joy of creation, beheld no less the miseries of the fall. And it is easy to form to the apprehension, with what interest they entered into the sad reverse of circumstances, in the ruin of mankind, who at the formation of man are said as morning stars

to have sang together when all the sons of God shouted for joy.

I connect also with this view, another in the assembly, namely, our unhappy parents pourtrayed with countenances descriptive of various passions—anxiety, fear, and trembling. In the back ground I behold the tempter grinning a ghastly smile at the achievements his infernal policy had wrought; yet mingled with a direful apprehension that a judgment of a most tremendous kind was hanging over him. I behold also in imagination every where around, the horrible effects of the fall of man, manifesting themselves in the numberless ways by which the elements of nature testified their change, and the several creatures of the earth shewed forth their insubordination. But what can the imagination form to itself of all the direful events connected with this one event of man's contumacy and rebellion against God? Who shall sum up the evils then in embryo, which after ripened into maturity, and brought on all the murders, rapines, slaughters, and the ten thousand times ten thousand sorrows, which from age to age have followed in an endless succession, among the circumstances of mankind?

PART THE FOURTH.

To be read by the fourth elder scholar, in the hearing of the whole school.

OBSERVATIONS.

It will be well for us to pause over the view we have taken of the trial of our first parents, before that we proceed to hear the sentence the Lord God passed upon the several delinquents in their relative characters. The subject affords ample scope for the most profound meditation; and from the vast interest in which our whole nature is implicated in it, no subject can be more highly interesting.

Children of our school, and whosoever reads or hears this awful history of the fall; it will be our wisdom, if under the Lord's teaching, we behold those transactions

in the garden of Eden, as ourselves every one of us alike concerned. Adam was no private person, but the public head of his whole posterity. And as in the event had he preserved his integrity with it, he would have preserved to himself, and his whole race, the blessings the bountiful Lord gave him; so by his disobedience, he not only forfeited the bounties given him, but he entailed poverty, wretchedness, and misery, on all his posterity. When he fell, we all fell in him; for as an head, we, his children, might all be said to have been in his loins, in the time he transgressed, and as such were transgressors with him. Do not therefore let us pass away from this sad record of human sin, as an history in which we have no personal interest; but while we look at our first parents in their sin, behold in them the representatives of ourselves.

And let me detain you to take with you another observation from this solemn transaction. We behold our fallen parents, immediately after the commission of their sin, became as senseless as they were wicked; and in attempting to hide themselves from the divine presence amidst the trees of the garden, awfully manifested both their ignorance and enmity to God. The instruction this part of the subject contains, and which in a very particular manner comes home to the heart of children, is never to attempt concealment, when at any time we fall into offence either against God or man. From God we cannot conceal, and from man we ought not to attempt it, and especially by denials or untruths. The holy scripture saith, for the encouragement of every sinner to approach the throne of grace, that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, 1 John i. 3. And in relation to man, if through the bias of our fallen nature, we should at any time offend our parents, or friends, or our neigh-

bours, or one another in our associating together, feeling a just sense of our having done wrong, and as ingenuously saying so to the person we have offended, is the sure way of finding favour from them, and peace of mind to ourselves! The words of Elihu are very gracious to this purpose; surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement; I will not offend any more. That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more, Job xxxiv. 31, 32.

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LESSON IV.

*ON THE SENTENCE PASSED BY THE LORD GOD, UPON THE SEVERAL TRANSGRESSORS; IN WHICH IS CONTAINED THE GRACIOUS PROMISE OF MAN'S RECOVERY, THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS.*

PART THE FIRST.

To be read by the elder scholar, in the hearing of the whole school.

HOLY SCRIPTURE.

And the Lord God said unto the serpent, because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.—And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.—Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.—And unto Adam he said, because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.—Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field.—In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return

unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return, Gen. iii. 14—19.

PART THE SECOND.

To be read by the second elder scholar, as before, in the audience of the whole school.

OBSERVATIONS.

We must still consider ourselves as we read or hear these words, in Eden. The court is now waiting the just judgment of God upon the several delinquents. Each, we may well suppose, were standing before the Lord God, with fearful apprehensions, when the Lord God first passed sentence upon the serpent. It is worthy the remark, that no question of demand was made to the serpent as to the man and his wife, what he had done. The malignity of the evil spirit, who made the serpent his instrument for beguiling the woman, needed no investigation. But let us, one by one, mark the several characters of the Lord's denunciation. Did the Lord God say to the serpent—because thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life? And is it so? Yes! And was the sentence instantly executed upon the serpent? Yes! we have reason to conclude so. And is this the cause wherefore the serpent creeps upon his belly? Yes! Had the serpent somewhat of an erect posture before? It is more than probable he had. And is the serpent cursed above all cattle? Yes! Nothing in the creation of God is so truly execrable. Every one that seeth the serpent will flee from it, lest it should bite. And is dust the serpent's food? Yes! For it is highly observable, that when the prophet looking into the gospel day in which we live, and speaking of the Almighty sovereignty of grace, subduing the corrupt affections of our fallen nature, under the figure of the wolf and the lamb feeding

together; to shew that the sentence on the serpent is not repealed, he added, and dust shall be the serpent's meat, Isa. lxv. 25.

But while we hear the serpent's sentence, as the instrument made use of by Satan to accomplish his malignant purposes; we should yet more earnestly attend to the sentence on the accursed enemy of souls himself, who through scripture is called the old serpent, which deceiveth the whole world, Rev. xii. 9.

And was this sentence of the curse more abundantly directed to Satan? Yes! He is the very one on whom the whole pressure fell. And it behoves every child of God to keep this always in remembrance. And hath God put an everlasting enmity between our nature and the seed of the serpent? Yes! Blessed be God he hath. And ought not every child of God to pray for grace to resist this great enemy of our salvation? Oh! yes. And methinks I would have all that hear me, to be not only praying for grace to resist the wiles of Satan, but to take to ourselves the many sweet and precious promises the holy scriptures hold out for this purpose. Our most glorious Christ hath said, Behold! I give you power to tread on serpents, and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you, Luke x. 19. And did not the Lord say in another scripture, In my name shall they cast out devils, Mark xvi. 17. Yes! And is it not elsewhere most blessedly promised that all the church of God shall one day conquer him in Christ? Yes! For thus we read, Rom. xvi. 20. The God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly! Oh! precious salvation, in our most precious Christ!

But we must not stop here. We are still in imagination in Eden, and before the court, over which the Lord God is Judge himself. And next, the Lord God proceeds to pass sentence upon our first mother. And what did the Lord God pronounce on her? Unto the woman

he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee, Gen. iii. 16. And did the Lord God say thus? Yes. And are the sorrows and the conception of the woman greatly multiplied? Yes! Is it in sorrow she brings forth children? Yes! Who shall count the numbers multiplied? Who shall enumerate the tears, mark down the groans, or describe the sighs, which have been throughout the earth, from the days of Adam and Eve, to the present hour? We may best answer these questions by asking others; who can number the sand of the sea, or the drops of rain, or the days of eternity?

But the sentence on Adam comes next to be noticed, and a most trembling sentence it was. Let us examine the several heads in it one by one. First, the Lord God cursed the ground for man's sake! Did the Lord pronounce this doom on the earth? Yes! And hath the earth manifested the sad effects by numberless proofs? Yes! For the whole earth, of which Adam, by the divine gift, was the proprietor, and which during his innocency, brought forth spontaneously all that was beautiful, and desirable, and delicious, now became sterile and unproductive. Holy scripture is in point. A fruitful land maketh he barren for the wickedness of them that dwell therein, Ps. cvii. 34. And did the Lord pronounce that additional evil to the possessor himself, and did he say, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life? Yes! And is it not in sorrow, toil, and trouble, that the whole posterity of Adam eat of the productions, which cannot arise of themselves, but are the effects of labour, and very often used in pain? Yes! And did the Lord God pronounce the further sentence, that thorns and thistles should be the natural production of a soil the Lord for man's sake had cursed? Yes! And is it so, and hath it been so from generation to

generation? Yes! Is it in the sweat of the face that man eats bread? Yes! For ask any of the millions of the human race to be met with upon the face of the whole earth whether any of them are exempt; and whether this be not the universal condition of our fallen state? And what is the termination of the present life as relating to nature? Is not the close of it in every instance in death? Do not the whole race of men submit to the reign of death? Other monarchs there are, who govern for a time, and whose several empires are divided among many kings. But death is an universal monarch; in whose dominion all mankind upon earth dwell, while alive, and to whose sceptre all must submit by death. And was this the sentence pronounced on Adam? Yes! Did this contain an abridgment of all the evils of the fall? Yes! And doth dust to dust conclude the life of every man? Yes! And who then in the contemplation of it, beholding the vast change in the circumstances of mankind before the fall, and after, but must feel humbled in the solemn consideration; and of every man's guiltiness before God, each should hear for himself that trembling sentence—Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

PART THE THIRD.

To be read by the third elder scholar.

OBSERVATIONS.

But in order to enter into the full apprehension of this wonderful transaction, we must not only consider it historically, but spiritually; and behold here shadowed forth the outlines of him, who in scripture is called the second Adam, even the Lord from heaven; and who is the very person folded up in that promise made to the first Adam so called, 1 Cor. xv. 45. when in the midst of our parents' sentence, it was said, the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. When I consider the subject in this point of view, my mind is over-

whelmed with astonishment in the vast contemplation. For in the midst of this just judgment on our first father, and in him all his posterity, we are directed no less to behold the infinite grace of God, in bringing salvation, and by a means so surpassing all finite apprehension fully to fathom, in the person and work of him, who came in the fulness of time to repair the dreadful breach by the fall, and to do away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Children of our school! let us all attend to some few of these glorious truths, which the scriptures of our God teach us of this glorious person, and of his mighty salvation; and observe therefrom, what a divine light breaks in and shines through the dark and gloomy subject we have been reviewing of man's fall before God.

You see, I hope, without going over the ground again, the awful consequence of sin; which, though it separated not the church from the love of God, (for amidst the just, but trembling sentence here pronounced upon our first parents, we can, and do trace divine love mingled with it) yet it separated from that sweet communion with God, which man in his day of innocency enjoyed; and which our Lord Jesus Christ (of whom we so often read, but who is so little known) could only bring again, and is therefore called, the Repairer of the breach; the Restorer of the paths to dwell in, Isa. lviii. 12.

And as the sentence pronounced on the fall declared, that while the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, it was said no less that it should bruise his heel; this implied the personal sufferings which should be sustained by him, the Redeemer, in accomplishing the vast purpose of raising up the foundation of many generations, and restoring perfect order among all the works of God. Look now then to this Almighty person, our most glorious Christ. Behold how divinely fitted for the accomplishment of this mighty work!

Contemplate him in the underived nature and essence of his Godhead! Behold him no less as he is described; the Word made flesh, and dwelt among us. And in the union of both, in one person, completely suited to have lain upon him all that was our due for sin; to receive all that was our due in punishment for that sin; and to bring in an everlasting righteousness, which might be unto all, and upon all them that believe.

It hath been before observed, that the sentence on our first parents, contained an abridgment of all the afflictions of life. Our nature, instantly on the fall, became subject to all the weaknesses and infirmities of nature. The food to sustain nature, which before was produced spontaneous, and without toil, in the garden of Eden, when dismissed from thence, could only be procured by the sweat of the brow. And death was the only close of all. All and every one of these were sustained by our adorable Redeemer. For the express purpose of which, when the Son of God tabernacled in substance of our flesh, he was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, Rom. viii. 3. And though in himself, in his own human nature, he was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, yet when the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all, (Isa. liii. 6.) he stood forth, laden by the imputation of our sins, as if he himself had committed every one of them. Hence he was the very person, as the glorious head of his body, the church, who sustained in all, the comprehensive branches of the sentence pronounced upon Adam. Our first earthly father, and all his children, have felt and do feel, more or less, the sad effects of his transgression. But it was none but the ever blessed Jesus that bore all our sins, and carried all our sorrows; and consequently, when all our sins were laid on him, they were taken from the church. And hence the scripture decidedly determines this great truth, when saying, that

he was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21.

But we must not stop here. It was pronounced on Adam, that he should eat bread in the sweat of his brow, and as hath been already observed, all Adam's children, more or less, find this; for even they who appear from outward circumstances to be exempt from labour to procure their bread, as the poorer part of mankind are obliged to do; yet let no one fancy that the rich, though exempt from work, are exempt from the sweat of the face, or what is much worse, and included in it as part of the same, the sweat of the heart. For who shall say, what toils the great ones of the earth sustain, when engaged in their pursuits of what they call pleasure; and are making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof? If a comparative statement was made between man and man; and the poor man's labour, with health and content, for the maintenance of himself and family, were weighed in one scale; and the rich man's pursuits of ambition, sensuality, and the world, with the numberless disappointments therefrom, were put in the other, the preponderancy of what the scripture terms the sweat of the brow, would make a vast balance of suffering, among what are called the great ones of the earth. But when we have taken in the account of the whole, and formed an idea of all the miseries of life, brought in by the fall, it all sinks to nothing compared to him, who, by way of distinction, is called, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, Isaiah liii. 8. Many a sweat of sorrow, and of pain, have been borne by thousands, but none but the Lord Jesus ever sweat a bloody sweat; when in the open air in the garden of Gethsemane, and in a cold night, he sweat a bloody sweat; and when in an agony, the sweat of his face was as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground; Luke xxiv. 44. What were all the groans

of mankind; the destruction of the whole world by water; the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire; the shrieks and cries of a thousand and ten thousand hospitals, which disease, by sin, hath induced from generation to generation, compared to the sufferings of the Son of God, in our nature, when he suffered on the cross, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God?

And lastly, the final sentence pronounced on Adam, when the Lord God said, dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return; never had its full execution until the Son of God, as our Head and Husband, and in our nature, tasted death for every man. He it was, that said by the spirit of prophecy, ages before his incarnation, thou hast brought me into the dust of death, Ps. xxii. 15. And he it was that by his death, sustained in his own person, both the pangs of the first death and of the second, when he drank the dregs of the cup of trembling and wrung them out, Isa. li. 17. For by enduring in his holy person all the penal effects of divine justice due to sin, he fully and completely removed the curse of sin from the church of God. And for this plain reason which holy scripture declares, by virtue of his divine nature, all he wrought, all he suffered, were divine acts and sufferings of the Godhead, in the human nature of man; which gave an infinite dignity, an infinite value, and infinite efficacy to all. And hence, as our Surety, he hath put away sin, with all its tremendous consequences; and by his stripes are we healed. And thus we discover, through divine teaching, how highly the church of God was interested in those great events in the garden of Eden. The sentence pronounced on the first Adam, had its full and complete accomplishment in the person of the second, our Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore the whole church of God may take to herself the words of the Lord by the apostle, Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, Gal. iii. 13. And

as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, 1 Cor. xv. 22.

PART THE FOURTH.

To be read by the fourth elder scholar, in the hearing of the whole school.

OBSERVATIONS.

In closing this earliest of all histories, and the most important of all events, it is difficult to find expressions sufficiently striking to extol the divine goodness, or to lament man's degeneracy. Who could have conceived, at the commencement of the narrative, that events so infinitely momentous as have been shewn, were folded up in it? When God had finished the works of creation, and on reviewing the operations of his Almighty hand, pronounced every thing to be not only good, but *very* good; and when by the apostacy of man, we behold the vast change, not only every thing to have become evil, but *very* evil; who should have calculated upon things as they then appeared; that as at creation itself, light at the command of God sprung out of darkness, so by the grace of God good was made to spring out of evil; and the very sin of man was made subsidiary to the greater glory of God?

Children of the school! let us all pause. And from hence let us all learn to form just conclusions of all events we meet with in life, according to the standard of this holy scripture, and not according to our own statement of it.

And first, we may at all times, and upon all occasions, from what we are here taught, learn, that the divine glory is, and must necessarily be, the first and ultimate design of all things. It was the divine glory which God had in view in creating. It was, and is, the divine glory which God had in view in redeeming. And it is the divine glory in restoring our nature to its original purity, after the fall, by Jesus Christ. Let it be our study, therefore, to make this the standard of our judgment in all things; and then we shall never be at a loss,

under God's teaching, in forming right apprehensions of all the events that we behold, or with which we ourselves are connected in life.

Secondly, let us also learn, under divine teaching, to make a proper use of the gracious revelation God hath made of himself, in both these transactions; first, of our original state, and then of our fallen state; the one shewing us what our nature was, in its original, pure, and holy state; and the other, what we are in our sunken, ruined, and degraded state; and the boundless mercy manifested to us, in our recovery from all the consequent miseries of it, from the glorious work and by the glorious person of our most glorious Lord Jesus Christ.

And lastly, to add no more. Let the children of our school beg for grace to have it always impressed upon their minds, the infinite condescension and goodness of God, not only to make the whole subservient to his glory, but to make us acquainted with a knowledge of the whole, in making us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

No doubt but the morning stars which sang together at creation, when all the sons of God shouted for joy, were present at the fall, and were looking on when the Lord God pronounced the sentence of judgment and condemnation upon the person which had dared to violate the divine command. And no doubt they heard also the purposes which were declared of the divine will, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. But certain it is, that they had no knowledge to what that promise referred, or could have conceived the most distant idea to what should be the extent, when he who was God would become man, and by his almighty power do away the whole effect of sin by the sacrifice of himself. These things they knew not, but we are told they desire to look into, 1 Pet. i. 12.

And there can be no question, but though Satan

the old serpent, was there before the court, when God pronounced his sentence, yet it appears from the analogy of scripture, that the deceiver had no apprehension of his own ruin, or of the serious, complete conquest, in the destruction of sin and Satan. He had no consciousness of the immense events folded up in the solemn scripture, that Christ should bruise the serpent's head, and he should bruise his heel, Gen. iii. 15. What a mercy then must it be, that we upon whom the ends of the world are come, should be savingly acquainted with these things; and that the Lord should give us grace to regard them, and to believe in them to salvation!

I only add a prayer to God, that the unction of the Spirit may be upon our hearts in the use of those lessons; and to him be everlasting glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

# OBITUARY

OF

# PIOUS CHRISTIANS.

## I.

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF GRACE IN THE LIFE OF WILLIAM COOMBS, OF BUCKFASTLEIGH, IN THE COUNTY OF DEVON. AGED 13.

It would have proved a mortifying consideration to the pride of nature, had I assumed the office of a biographer, in order to have required reputation among men, that the life of him, whose history it hath fallen to my province to send forth into the world, affords not a single line to grace the page in the relation of his pedigree.

The memoirs of a poor boy, born in the humblest poverty, and living and dying in the lowest circumstances, shuts out at once every pretension of this kind. All that was sweet, and tender, and interesting, in this dear child's walk of life, was rendered so, without the adventitious circumstances of any earthly connection.

And if the reader will indulge me with an observation, which I have long since made, and which the frequent recurrence of similar remarks hath ripened into a firmness of opinion, I would venture to say, very fully persuaded am I in my own mind, that by whatever affinities the faithful shall be known in that day, when all final arrangements shall take place, the connections and relationships of this life, however sweet and endearing they now are, and however kindly formed by the Divine Appointer, to answer a thousand gracious purposes of his wisdom, they will be found to have little more than imaginary, and extending only to the accomplishment of the various designs of the present state.

The charities of nature in the world we inhabit possess all the sweet and irresistible influences which the great Author of nature intended from them, as they arise

out of the several claims of life, in the parent, the husband, the child, and the friend; but in that upper and better world to which we are hastening, we are told by an authority, whose decision must be well founded, that the glorified inhabitants of eternity neither know, nor are likened in the affinities of earthly connections, but are as the angels of God: and as it was with our Redeemer himself when upon earth, so it will be with his followers when in heaven; whosoever shall have done the will of God, the same will have been our brothers, and sisters, and mothers.

And if I may presume on the reader's indulgence, to add one observation more, I would remark, that as the child of grace stands detached and unconnected with any relationship of this nature, during the minority of his existence in the present life,—so doth he, in fact, derive no advantages from any natural acquirements.

All teaching, but the teaching of the blessed Spirit, and his gracious operations on the soul in the various methods by which he manifests himself in his word by his providences, ordinances, and the like, is altogether nugatory and vain. Spiritual improvements must be the result of spiritual influences. The art of man adds nothing to the scale of knowledge in the divine science.

I will be free to confess, that what the world calls education, hath all its advantages as far as nature is concerned. Education may inform the understanding, may refine the mind, may restrain the habit; nay, more than these, education will go yet further: for as far as an head-apprehension of divine truths, unconnected with heart-experience of their power can be acquired, education will accomplish this also. Men have learnt, and men will still learn, to reason and argue upon the mysteries of our holy faith, with a precision

the most astonishing, while their lives afford the strongest evidence, at the same time, that they are strangers, nay, even enemies to all vital godliness.

But in all these things there is an eternal line of distinction between nature and grace. No human power is competent to a work which is wholly supernatural. To awaken the human soul from a state of darkness in trespasses and sins to a new and spiritual life; to call into action its dormant qualities, and to excite all its heaven-born powers to bring it forward to a conscious sense of its own dignity and excellence, that it may rise into an holy superiority, over all the dull passions of nature, and be prompted to look through the casement of the body, with a longing eye of faith, after that immortal state of happiness and joy to which it is begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead:—these are the principles of which human art and education have no influence, and which can never be acquired in human schools.

Both these form peculiar characters in the divine science, and seem to have been very strikingly exemplified in the life of him, who is to be the subject of this memoir.

William Coombs (as I find by the memorandum made of him by one of his relations) was born at Buckfastleigh, in Devonshire, the 4th of November, 1788.

His parents were in such poor and indigent circumstances, as to be among that humble class of characters who receive pay of the parish; and of consequence, therefore, their son participated in all the disadvantages of such a situation.

In his person there was nothing remarkably striking, not a feature that I could perceive to indicate any thing of greatness in the mind; but on the contrary, rather a certain vacancy of countenance which was totally uninteresting.

There is certainly somewhat very wonderful and mysterious, as it appears to us, in the predilections of grace. The highly-favoured objects of this divine bounty have no outward attractions to recommend them to our esteem.

I have often been struck with astonishment when beholding some very ordinary and even (might I be allowed to call it so) forbidding form, with whom a longer and more intimate acquaintance hath manifested, that this miserable, ill-shapen, and deformed body hath been animated with a most sweet and precious soul, highly taught of grace, and walking in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; while, on the contrary, I have seen many a beautiful and attracting figure, concerning whom, like the prophet at the first view of Eliab's majesty, I have been ready to cry out, surely, the Lord's anointed is before me; and yet a discovery hath been soon made, that under all this appearance of a loveliness of person, a total gracelessness of character hath been veiled. Every thing tends to prove that the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.

It appears from the relation given of this dear youth by those who knew him, that there were no traces of any serious conduct, to distinguish him from other children, during the days of his unregeneracy. The transition from the darkness of nature to the light of grace, was altogether sudden and unexpected. Prompted one day, he knew not why, to attend the ministry of the word in the chapel of Buckfastleigh, the preaching was blest to him, under the labours of that humble, but highly favoured servant of the Lord, David Garet. The account he used to give of this transition (to use his own words) was this; 'the Lord (said he) made the ministry of Mr. Garet useful to me, in shewing me my

dreadful state by nature, and directing me to a dear Redeemer for salvation.' This was when he was about eleven years of age.

From this time he became a close follower of all the means of grace, and seldom missed a prayer-meeting; and it was very early after, that the Lord had opened his heart to receive the truth in the love of it, that the same gracious Lord opened his mouth, to testify his experience of it, in the sweet exercises of prayer and praise; it was, to the astonishment of every one in the prayer-meeting, to witness how this child poured out his soul in prayer before God. Mr. Garet's account of it is very striking; 'Divine grace (saith he, in one of his letters to me, speaking of this child) was eminently displayed in giving him abilities in prayer, to assist our small assemblies.' His address to God in prayer was simple and affecting, and so diffusive, as to gain the admiration of all that heard him. Before he was twelve years old, he was enabled to collect and retain, for the most part, all the texts of scripture from which he heard me preach, three times on the Lord's day, as well as the sum and substance of the discourses themselves; which formed the subject of his devotions in the subsequent prayer-meeting exercises.

Some apprehensions being entertained by the friends of godliness, that the gift of prayer which he possessed might prove a temptation from the enemy to make him vain,—it was thought prudent not to call him forth to exercise for some time; and this plan was followed for near three months; but Mr. Garet says, that he did not seem mortified in this restraint, neither did it induce him to relax his attendance on the several means of grace.

The singularity of his walk with God, and his avoiding the puerile amusements of those who were before his companions, subjected him to much scoff and ridi-

cule; but these things by no means distressed him, equal to the reflections which arose in his mind, from apprehensions concerning the unawakened and careless state of his parents. In a conversation which he had with one of the people on the subject, he thus expressed himself: 'I have come home from the word to my poor carnal mother, and her carnal company; and I have gone out again, and walked about, like a poor dog in the streets, in the greatest distress, on her account; but, sometimes, I have found in this state the Lord precious to my soul.'

Towards the close of the last summer, it was supposed that the parish would put him out apprentice; and, from an apprehension that he should thereby be deprived of attending the means of grace, it occasioned great anxiety to him.

It was at this time my acquaintance with him began. Mr. Garet being exceedingly desirous to procure some easy place for him in life, which might best suit his tender spirits, and, at the same time, promote his wishes of following ordinances, thought of making application to me on the subject; and accordingly sent the child to me at Plymouth, under the care of a friend, with the following letter:—

TO THE REV. DR. HAWKER, PLYMOUTH.

Buckfastleigh, Oct. 10, 1801.

'Rev. Sir,

'The bearer of this letter, William Coombs, is a youth of hopeful and promising disposition. I have watched over him something more than two years; and have been much delighted with his uniform behaviour. His genius is beyond any of his equals in this place, but his acquaintance with scripture, his abilities in prayer, and, in a word, his piety in general, surpasseth all I have ever seen in one so young. But, like all the followers of the Lamb, he is called to take up his

cross. His parents' ignorance of God, and companions' conduct towards him, find him matter of prayer. Unless better provided for, it will be his lot shortly to be apprenticed by the parish.—A very respectable member of our church, desired me to give him a line which might recommend him to the notice of Dr. Hawker. Perhaps you may think of some pious friend to place him with as a foot-boy, or in any other menial place. I need not tell my reverend friend, that such a regard might meet the divine approbation. Unfeignedly wishing you every blessing,

'I remain, dear Sir, &c. &c.

'DAVID GARET.'

It so happened that the dear youth made his first appearance with this letter on the morning of the Lord's day. I took him immediately to our Sunday school, where our children were engaged in their usual exercises of reading the scriptures, singing hymns, and prayer.

After he had heard some of the children read, I asked him privately, whether he would wish to do the same. He declined reading, by observing that he could not read very well: but, if I pleased, he would exercise in prayer; and this he did in so sweet and engaging a manner, and in terms so truly scriptural and animating, as I had scarce ever heard excelled, even from riper years. The effect felt upon this occasion in our assembly, both by the children of the school and many pious persons, who assembled with them, was such as will, I believe, be long remembered by all. Scarce a person present who did not give testimony, by dropping tears of holy joy, compelling them to exclaim, what hath God wrought!

One of our friends, who is rendered dear to the people by his faithfulness to God and to souls, was determined to question the child on the subject of grace, by way of ascertaining the reality of his christian character,

and as soon as the prayer-meeting was over, took him aside, and asked him, 'if he knew what he had been saying?' To which the child answered,—'he hoped he did.' Our friend again demanded, 'if the Lord had taught him those things for himself, and if he had felt the power thereof in his own soul?' The dear child said,—'he believed he had; he hoped he had: but,' said he, 'sometimes my heart is afraid I shall not get to heaven at last, I am such a sinner, and my sins are so many.' Our friend asked him, 'what reason he had to think that he should never get to heaven?' He replied,—'that the Lord comforted him with his word, and brought him peace to his conscience by his blood!' Our friend instantly answered, 'what blood?' and he as instantly replied,—'the blood of Jesus Christ.' 'And do you know,' said our friend, 'who Jesus Christ was?' He said, 'the Son of God.' 'There was a question once asked,' continued our friend, 'what think ye of Christ?—Now let me ask you?' He readily answered, 'Peter said, thou art the Son of the living God;—and I say so too.'

Some of the friends present thought these questions too close, and would have him spared the inquiry; but the child himself not only seemed delighted with them, but very readily entered into a description of the Lord's dealings with his soul; and gave an account of the distress he had felt when his eyes were first opened to the views of the sins of his nature; and how the Lord had relieved him at times with the prospect and assurance of pardon and peace to his soul, by the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

All the friends belonging to the several prayer-meetings in Plymouth, Dock, and Stone-house, were earnest to have him among them. He visited, more than once, the prayer-meeting of the Rev. Mr. Jones, at Plymouth Dock:—and a remarkable evidence of his knowledge of divine things was given by him at one of those

assemblies. That scripture happening to be read, which saith, "by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight,"—the child cried out, 'if there was no other text in the bible to prove man's helpless state, this would be enough to shew it.'

Several plans were forming among the friends of Plymouth and Dock, by way of providing for the child's future line of life; and one person particularly found his heart so affectionately drawn towards him, that he resolved to take him into his shop, and bring him up to his business, though he had refused a very considerable premium which had been offered to him a little while before with an apprentice.

But it appears by the sequel, that far different were the Lord's purposes concerning him. He had graciously been pleased to favour this part of his sacred inclosure, his garden, with the sight of this fragrant plant of his right-hand planting; but it was only before he removed him to his paradise above. In condescension to his church, as if to shew them what his Almighty power could accomplish, he had caused this sweet bird to take his flight over to us, and sing among us a few notes to the praise of the glory of his grace: but it was only preparatory to his entrance into bliss, to warble the Redeemer's merits in unceasing strains for ever.—I cannot but hope that the sincere followers of the Lord in our churches will consider this transient view of the child in this light, and derive the intended improvements from it.

He had scarce been among us a few weeks, when symptoms appeared upon him of a decay of nature, and it was thought advisable to remove him as fast as possible to his native air. Accordingly, on the seventh of November, the friends conducted him home. It should seem that he had strong presentiments that his departure was at hand; for in the coach, during the journey, he frequently spoke of it with a degree of rapture and

satisfaction. One of the friends who accompanied him in his journey, relates, that nothing could be more pleasing than his conversation and society: for, weak as he was, he was continually singing praises to God and the Lamb. And when he was asked, how he was? and how he felt himself? he always answered, 'I am very happy. I knew that God would strengthen me.'

He continued but five days after his arrival at Buckfastleigh, and that in a very weak and languishing state, before his death. The greater part of his waking hours were spent in speaking on his own feelings respecting salvation, and in exhorting others to the same important end.

Some of his expressions were exceedingly sweet and precious; and the manner in which they were delivered (as a memorandum sent me by one that was present testifies) gave them singular emphasis on the minds of the hearers. 'I am now taking my farewell of you,' (said he to his uncle, who came to see him) and added, 'happy! happy!' And a little while after he said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth. Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

There were some persons standing in the room, who said (and they spake loud enough for him to hear) that they did believe the sting of death was taken away from him. To which he answered, then "thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

On the morning of the evening he died, he spake many affectionate and moving things, as they seemed to have arisen in his mind without much order or arrangement. 'Oh! to grace how great a debtor!—There is laid up for all saints, such glory as no mortal can conceive!—I was standing idle in the market-place, but free grace called me into the vineyard.' His cap

becoming troublesome, he desired his mother to move it for him, observing, at the same time, he should not want caps long.

During the day he desired to see his two younger sisters. To the eldest he said, 'I can only commend you into the hands of the Great Disposer of all events; and then bade them both farewell. After this, he prayed most feelingly for his poor father, as he called him.

He complained that his pains were very sharp; 'I am afraid, (said he) that I offend the Lord, in crying out under them.' Mr. Garet who was then present, said, 'my dear, you recollect, "that the Lord knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are but dust."' Soon after, he said, 'I thought I should have been home before, but God's time is the best time;' and added, in faultering accents, 'many of God's dear people murmur under his afflicting hand, but a moment in glory will more than make up for the afflictions of an age!'

In the evening he grew very weak and faint, and (as Mr. Garet remarked to me in a letter) about seven o'clock, left this mortal for an immortal state, in all the triumph of faith. Mr. Garet adds, 'his affliction was severe,—his patience exemplary,—his senses perfect to the last moment. All his deportment was pious—his expressions truly divine and evangelic. Such a sick or dying bed I have never before attended. Every spectator was more or less affected. His soul was almost incessant in prayer and praise. His solemn commending his sisters to God's rich grace,—his pious prayers for his parents,—his deep love to all his christian friends, have left sensations on my mind not easily expressed.'

Thus died, at the age of thirteen, this dear youth, ripe for glory. A splendid manifestation of the sovereignty of grace, at once to silence all the reproaches

of the infidel, and to remove all the doubts of the believer. Such an illustrious testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus, in the opening of the 19th century, is enough to animate the church of Christ through all the periods of it; and if one may venture so to interpret it, seems to be an earnest and pledge from a faithful covenant God that he will abundantly increase Zion's converts, and "add to her church such as shall be eternally saved."

Mr. Garet adds, in the relation of his death, that the Lord was magnified in this child's departure. He addressed about five hundred persons on the occasion of his funeral, from Psalm cii. 23.; since which, their prayer-meetings have been thronged with young people, and the Lord hath poured out the spirit of prayer upon several, in opening their mouths for his glory. So that the people of God at Buckfastleigh are led to hope, that the interest of the church of Christ will be as much advanced by his death, as heretofore edified and comforted by his life; and that both together will operate under God the Spirit, to promote the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom among them.

If I may be indulged with subjoining any observations of my own to the narrative of this child's history, I would desire the reader to pause over what hath been related, and seriously attend to the following remarks, which unavoidably arise out of it: —

1st. Let the sceptic of every description say, what greater proof can be afforded of the sovereignty of divine grace, than in an instance so plain, so simple, and so unvarnished, as in this child's history. Here were no effects, no prejudices of education, nothing that can be put down to the account of habit, or memory, or education, or example. A poor boy, unconscious of what salvation meant, when first brought under the influence of it, and as unconscious of the necessity of it, until he became a partaker of its power,

is made a living and dying testimony to its truth. Why will scepticism resist such palpable conviction?

2d. Let the sceptic of less degree, who in part admits the truth of the gospel, but denies the influence of the Spirit's work in the heart; let him say also, what greater testimony than this child's instance holds forth, can he require of the necessity of a supernatural agency to induce effects such as are here recorded? Explain to me if you can, on any other principles than what the word of God hath furnished, why so many there are of riper years, who attend the means of grace, and follow the form of godliness, while destitute of the power of it,—while the Lord is literally "found of them that seek him not?" From what cause, but this of distinguishing grace, can we possibly ascribe the striking difference; in the very moment that the children in the temple hailed the Redeemer with hosannas, the jewish priests were moved with indignation; and yet had outward evidences been the predisposing cause, from whence should those children have learnt of the coming Saviour, while the rulers, with the scriptures in their hands, were uninformed of his approach?

3rd. It is possible this little tract may fall into the hands of some young person who is as yet unacquainted with divine things, and hath neither learnt the state of his own heart before God, nor what Christ is to the soul. Shall I possess so much influence over you, my youthful reader, as to prevail upon you to pause again, in the meditation of what you have read, and then to fold up the book with prayer, that the Lord may be as gracious to you as to the child whose history you have been attending to? Depend upon this certain truth, there must be grace given in this life, or there will be no glory in another; and as no age of life is too early for the grave, so no season is too young to be made partaker of the heavenly calling. The prophet Samuel was but a child when the Lord manifested his grace

towards him; and Josiah the king, was but eight years old when he began to seek after the God of David, his father. It will be a very happy circumstance, if, in your instance, my young reader, whoever you are, the example of this dear youth should operate, under divine grace, "to make you wise betimes unto salvation, through the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

4th. And while I would make this inference from the case before us, as it particularly seems to appeal to the youthful breast, shall I not venture to say, what a loud call it certainly makes to the elder branches of my readers, who are ignorant of vital godliness,—unawakened from the death of sin, unrenewed in the spirit of their minds, and are "without God and without Christ in the world!" Look at the instance of this dear youth! Compare your unawakened state with what he was while among us; calculate the sure event of what may follow, agreeably to the unalterable determination of scripture, if departing out of life as you have hitherto lived; and will not the contemplation excite in the soul the rising prayer, "Lord, save, or I perish?"

5th. But, above all, what a sweet and gracious message of our covenant God, who is rich in mercy, doth this dear child's example bring with it to all his church and people! "How doth the Lord wait to be gracious!" Ichabod is not written upon our churches. And, notwithstanding the blessed Spirit's influence is denied by many, and the Redeemer's merits so little regarded by numbers, praises to our God his glory is not departed. Oh! that this precious proof of the Lord's sovereignty in grace, may rouse and animate both ministers and people to wrestle with God in prayer, that his blessing may be abundantly poured out upon our congregations, and the windows of heaven so opened, to suppy grace amidst our assemblies, that "there may not be room to receive it!" May that

blessed promise of the latter day's glory be hastening upon us, "when a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation;" for Jehovah hath said, "I, the Lord, will hasten it in his time!"

6th. Lastly, from addressing man, I would humbly beg for grace to turn unto the Lord; and, in the name of the great Redeemer, through the Spirit's influence, to bless God for the monument he hath raised to his glory among his church, in the instance of this dear child's salvation. Everlasting praises be to our God, in the Father's love, the Saviour's grace, and the Spirit's work, for what he hath wrought! We desire to accept it as a token and pledge of thy unchanging love to thy people! May it be the forerunner of many more whom thou wilt raise up among us! Take the work, Lord, into thine own hand, and may the congregations of the faithful be so continually under thy influence, that successive generations may arise to call thee blessed! Amen.

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ON A PRAYER-MEETING OF CHILDREN.

High in the shining courts above
Reigns God the sov'reign King;
And angels round the throne of love
Sweet hallelujahs sing.

He smiles on ev'ry pious mind,
And stoops our songs to hear;
But not to those bright realms confin'd,
He knows his childrens' pray'r.

He sees where youthful hearts unite,
And form a social band;
And Jesus ever takes delight
To guide them with his hand.

Their conversation and their pray'rs
Are music in his ears;
His smiles dispel their gloomy cares,
And dissipate their fears.

O how they scorn these sordid charms,
Which carnal minds pursue;
Celestial love their bosom warms,
With bliss for ever new.

Sometimes they lift a longing eye
  Towards their heavenly home;
And in sweet ecstacies of joy,
  Invite their Lord to come.

The shining of Jehovah's grace,
  And Jesus' bleeding love,
Allure them thro' this wilderness
  To brighter joys above.

O did the youths around but know
  How great their pleasures are,
They would each golden joy forego,
  Such matchless bliss to share.

J. B.

## II.

On the 20th of April, 1792, Mary Le Fortune, a very poor but gracious woman, finished her mortal pilgrimage, and was gathered unto her fathers. Having for many years been confined to her bed, by reason of a paralytic affection, the Lord's providence furnished hereby not only an opportunity to her for the exercise of faith and patience, but opened a retreat for others, to take lessons in the Lord's school; and gave occasion to prove the full testimony of that scripture which saith, "it is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting."

Her little apartment (and truly little it was) was not unfrequently filled with gracious visitors, to whom the poor sufferer became a preacher from her bed of sickness. Besides a prayer-meeting held regularly once in every week, she had praying friends, more or less, with her every day. To speak of her in the general, it must be said, that, like Hannah, she was a woman of a sorrowful spirit: but it was the Lord's good pleasure to exercise her with sharp but sanctified afflictions. Towards the close of her life, her enjoyments in the Saviour's presence, and the sweet visits of his grace, were eminently increased. The writer of this short memoir was present when she breathed her last; and found it to be, though infinitely solemn, what the sacred writer hath left on record; "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints!" It was a refreshing sight to behold the funeral of this poor unknown (though well known) woman, attended, like that of Stephen, with many devout persons. The plainness of the parade, while followed by such numbers, attracted the attention of the lookers on. And while some (as the procession passed) asked, who is

this? one from the procession replied, it is a king's daughter! A very plain unornamented stone is placed at her grave, with this inscription:—

'1799 Mary Le Fortune was buried here.

'She was for many years a patient follower of the 'Lord in the regeneration.—Reader! what are you?'

III.

On the 3rd. of May, 1799, died Mr. Edward Hayman, of Plymouth, aged 22. The very singular providence manifested in this young man's death, became so pointed and particular, that it seemed to command more than ordinary attention in the town and neighbourhood where it happened; and is one among the many solemn and loud voices in which the Lord is continually calling upon the sons of men, in this thoughtless, dying world.

This youth was apparently in the most perfect state of health, on the morning of his marriage; and as well from his time of life, as the general stamina of his constitution, no human being on the morning of that day could have been pointed out as bidding fairer to weather out the storms of many winters. On the evening of the same day, however, the messenger of death appeared. Without any previous symptom, and, as far as could be discovered, without any previous cause, disposing to such an event, he found himself vomitting blood. The hæmorrhage continued for many days without remission; and though, in the intervals of the blood ceasing to flow, some small hopes for the moment seemed to arise that he might recover; yet, after three weeks languishing, "the dust returned to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God who gave it."

With respect to the frame and state of his mind in divine things, it should seem to have been very evident, that he had in times past "tasted that the Lord is gracious." For more than once, during the intermissions of his illness, he expressed an earnest desire that the Lord would be pleased to comfort him again by a passage of his holy word, which had afforded singular consolation some time before. The portion of scripture

was read to him at his request, and the friend making some little omission or error in reading it, he corrected her, and set her right. The verse of scripture alluded to is the 10th of the 41st chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah. "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

In the early stage of the disorder, the desire of life particularly manifested itself, and he was frequently complaining to the attendance around his bed-side, that he wished he could find his will more resigned to the Lord's will. But as the complaint advanced, there seemed to be a total deadness to the world induced. Some of his expressions were very precious, and engaging. Several hymns were read to him at his request, and many portions of the holy scriptures. And he was frequently left alone by his particular desire; during which seasons he was overheard in fervent prayer, and earnest entreaties with God. The leading points which appeared in his conversation and in his prayers, were the strongest expressions of his own unworthiness, and of the Redeemer's all-sufficiency for salvation: and from the humble confidence with which he frequently expressed himself of finding acceptance with God through Christ, there should seem but little question, that "he had found him of whom Moses and the prophets did write."

So truly singular and interesting a case could not but attract general attention and general inquiry. The prayers of the faithful in the congregation were very earnestly requested by him, during the intermediate season, from his seizure to his death, that it might be a sanctified affliction, in whatever way it should please the Lord to terminate it; that either in life or in death he might glorify God. And when prayer ceased, by his removal, to be any longer useful to him, an

endeavour was made, under the hope of a divine blessing, to render the circumstances of his case useful to others. The minister of the parish to which he belonged, thought proper to improve the solemn providence, in a funeral sermon (from that same portion of scripture which had been so memorable to the deceased) at his interment. And taking occasion therefrom to observe, that nothing but an assured interest in the covenant blessings in Christ Jesus could become the security of any dark and trying hour; he very earnestly hoped, that the Great Head of his church and people would overrule the present dispensation of his providence to the general good purposes to which it was eminently calculated to minister; and more especially to the benefit of those whom, in the very moment of his speaking the Lord was undressing also, however they were unconscious of it, for the night of death.

IV.

In the village of Yealmpton, near Plymouth, lately died John Moss, a young man, aged 26; concerning whom in the Lord's dealings with him, as well in a way of providence as grace, there seems to have been so many remarkable interpositions, that we hope a short memoir of him may become both acceptable and improving to our readers.

At a very early age, when quite a child, he escaped being drowned by the instrumentality of a little girl; who, seeing him fall into the river, and washing down with the stream, caught him by the frock, and dragged him to the shore.

In his 9th year, when accompanying his father in the drawing of a cart, he fell in such a direction under it, that the wheel grazed so very near his ribs as to leave the marks upon his skin. A third instance of God's preservation of him occurred about two years after; when, running with other boys at play across a plank, which was placed over the mouth of a brick-kiln, he fell backward into the kiln about seventeen feet deep, and escaped unhurt. And again, in his 18th year, when at his work in a lime quarry, he was blown up with the rock, but received no material injury.

In all these instances, which took place during the time of his unregeneracy, he may be considered as a standing monument of the truth of that blessed doctrine which the apostles take notice of, viz. of being "preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." And by the way, we beg our readers to pause and reflect, what a door of the most gratifying nature is opened to the view of all awakened souls, whom divine grace hath called with an holy calling; if they diligently look back to the many instances (more or less) of superintended

mercy, which have been vouchsafed to them at times, when they were both unconscious of their own perilous state and of God's love; what ten thousand dangers lay in ambush on every side in their path: and though, perhaps, frequently brought down to the very brink of the grave, as it seemed to appear to human observation; yet were they the while as secure as though no evil was nigh their dwellings; "neither the terror by night, nor the arrow that flieth by day; the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor the destruction that wasteth at the noon-day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousands at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee," Psalm xci. 5, 6, 7.

And yet, if we may be indulged with making a farther remark, it should be to observe, what a still sweeter subject is folded up in this outer covering; when we contemplate the divine mercy during this period of unregeneracy, in which the Lord preserves his people from natural death, manifested in preserving them from spiritual, by keeping them from committing, amidst all their transgressions, the unpardonable sin. Here is displayed indeed a high hand of grace! Nor when we call to mind the wonderful extent of actual iniquity in some, and the multiplied and aggravated offences of others, when we consider the strength of temptation, the power of the enemy, the hot and fiery disposition of the human mind by nature, in the pursuit of evil; what but persevering grace could preserve from the perpetration of that sin, for the forgiveness of which there is no provision? Reader! if you are at present the happy subject of divine mercy, in being brought from nature's darkness into God's marvellous light, you will not want a second argument in the review of your past life to join issue with the apostle, when he says, "by the grace of God I am what I am."

The conversion of the young man, who is the imme-

diate subject of this short memoir, took place under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Luscombe, curate of Yealmpton, about three or four years before his death. And the first effects of it, as are very usual in the work of grace, were attended with much anxiety and distress. The apprehensions he entertained of the divine displeasure against sin, made him go very heavily. But from this state of dejection he found relief under the same ministry, in a sermon which the blessed Spirit made useful to him, preached by Mr. Luscombe some time after, from the 23rd Psalm, "he restoreth my soul;" wherein Mr. L. took occasion to set forth the pardoning mercy of God in Christ, as exemplified in the cases of David, Peter, Paul, &c. From this period his terrors gradually abated, and he became at length joyful in the Lord Jesus.

His love of ordinances and attendance on the means of grace was so great, that when at any time the church of Yealmpton hath been shut, (as, from a daughter church connected with it, hath been sometimes the case) he hath even walked to Plymouth, at the distance of nine miles, to enjoy the opportunity of public worship. And a diligent perusal of the word of God, notwithstanding his laborious employments, was among his daily pursuits.

The Lord was pleased to make his last illness long and trying, and various were the methods by which he was exercised. Many tedious nights of darkness and buffettings from the enemy he endured, which made him cry out frequently under the pressure, "Oh! that it was with me as in months past!" Mr. Luscombe, in a letter to the writer of this narrative, says, 'I visited him often during his sickness, a great part of which he was under a cloud; yet he would say, I know the ability of Christ to save, and I can and do trust my all in his hands; and if I perish, I will perish at his feet.' 'The day before he died, (Mr. L. adds) I again visited

him. He had slept nine hours; and I thought from his appearance, that he would awake no more in this world. But to my great astonishment, as well as of those around, after the profound sleep, he opened his eyes, and seeing that he was sensible, I asked him if he experienced a sense of the divine presence with him then, and whether Christ was precious to his soul. His answer was, yes, yes. He is very precious to me.—After this I saw him no more.'

His friends, who were standing around his bed-side at his departure, adds, that a few minutes before the solemn crisis, he suddenly cried out, 'praises, praises—sing hymns, sing louder.'

He died the 7th of July, 1799. At his interment at Yealmpton a sermon was preached by a neighbouring clergyman before a numerous congregation, from a text of scripture which had often refreshed him; and which, being the last words he made use of from the book of God, were particularly chosen for this purpose, 'Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire," 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

V.

Lately died, in the neighbourhood of Plymouth, James Walker, of the Dock Yard, aged forty-three years. His history, though short, is highly interesting. The first thirty years of his life were spent in the pursuits of sin and vanity, of which he was insensible; and thirteen successive years in grace; the last three of which were worn out in sickness and confinement.

The first impressions of grace he received through the instrumentality of the preached word. He had fractured his leg, and a long confinement ensued. But it appears that he arose from the bed of languishment as unconscious of the hand which smote him, as when he first lay down upon it.

His father (assuredly a gracious man) requested him, so soon as he was able to move about on crutches, to go with him to the house of God. This he refused. But, somewhat afterwards inducing him to alter his mind, he followed his father to the place of worship. The preacher's subject was the blessed effects of prayer. And the arguments he made use of to point out the privileges of those who had a throne of grace to fly to upon all occasions, contrasted with the state of the ungodly who had no helper in the heavens to comfort them in their sicknesses and sorrows, made such an impression upon his mind, that he hath been often heard to say, that if ever he prayed in his life it was under this sermon. He hastened home at the conclusion of the service, and immediately retiring to his chamber, dropped upon his knees, begging God to be merciful to him a sinner.

Soon after these dawnings of the spiritual day arose upon his mind, he found great temptations from the enemy. And the despair which operated upon him arose to such a degree, that at times he was drawn

almost to the act of self-destruction. However, that God, who had begun the good work in his heart, supported him, as he doth all his people, during the trial. Many of the precious promises of the gospel, which were recollected by him, came with such power and comfort to his heart, as could only be referred to a divine original.

A great variety of *ups* and *downs* in the christian warfare, during the subsequent ten years that he lived in the world, marked his character. But the last three years of his confinement were eminently blessed to him. Many were the precious sayings which dropped from his lips, and which will not easily be forgotten by those who heard them.

His pains were very great at times; but grace had wrought in his mind a strength suitable to his day. 'Not one pain more (he used frequently to say) shall I have, than my Redeemer, who hath the ordering of them, sees to be needful for me.' The bible is the precious book of God; and the promises in it as the pledges of God's love to his people, were his chief subjects of discourse.

One sentiment of his was very striking. To a friend who visited him some months before his death, and who was complaining of the corruptions of his fallen nature, which made him go heavily, he said, 'and why not carry them to Jesus? It is the believer's privilege to do this; and never to ponder his own spiritual defects without looking to Christ, and Christ only, for deliverance. Such an High Priest becomes poor burthened sinners. While we suffer our minds to be totally absorbed in self-complainings, we lose sight of Jesus, and the object of his coming. Angels, with the redeemed from among men in heaven, are never heard to speak of themselves, but of God and the Lamb.'

A few days before his death he awoke from sleep with more than ordinary refreshment, and expressed

increased assurances of the happiness which shortly awaited him. And on the evening previous to his departure, his wife, finding him free from pain and seemingly much composed, asked how he did? and whether Jesus was still precious? To which he made no answer. The poor woman, alarmed and fearing he might be worse, desired that if he could not speak, he would lift up his hand in token that Jesus was with him. Upon which he raised both hands, and clasped them together, and spoke aloud, 'Jesus is precious, most precious, and he is mine.

'I shall soon his power adore,
And praise his name for evermore.'

He continued in the perfect possession of his senses to the last; and the dying words which fell from his lips were, 'I am fixed on the rock. Farewell.'

It was thought proper to make an improvement of the providence of God, in taking to himself this follower of the Lord, by a seasonable discourse on the occasion. And this was accordingly done in the week following his interment, in the Rev. Mr. Hitchin's chapel at Dock, by a neighbouring clergyman, from these words of St. Paul's epistle to Titus, chap i. verse 2. "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began."

# POETICAL PIECES.

## I.

### THE ABBA HYMN, WITH NOTES FROM SCRIPTURE.

ABBA, Father ! Lord we call thee,[a]
Hallow'd name from day to day ;[b]
'Tis thy children's right to know thee,[c]
None but children Abba say.[d]
This high priv'lege we inherit,[e]
First thy gift, and then Christ's blood ;[f]
God the Spirit, to our spirit,
Witnes'th we are Sons of God.[g]

CHORUS.

Abba, Father ! still we call thee,
Abba sounds through all our host ;
All in heav'n and earth adore thee,
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Abba's love first gave us being,[h]
When in Christ, in that vast plan ;[i]
Abba chose the church in Jesus,
Long before the world began.

---

[a] "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father"—Rom. viii. 15.

[b] "After this manner therefore pray ye, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name"—Matt. vi. 9.

[c] "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord"—Jer. xxxi. 34.

[d] "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father"—Gal. iv. 6.

[e] "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him"—John xvii. 2.

[f] "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved ; in whom we have redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace"—Eph. v. 6, 7.

[g] "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God"—Rom. viii. 16.

[h] "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love"—Eph. i. 4.

[i] "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ ; to the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord"—Eph. iii. 9, 10, 11.

Oh, what love the Father bore us![a]
Oh, how precious in his sight![b]
When he gave his church to Jesus,[c]
Jesus! his whole soul's delight![d]

CHORUS.

Abba, Father, &c.

Though our Adam-fall in nature,
Seem to make e'en grace at stand;[e]
How to put us with the children,
How to give the goodly land:
But the plan himself had formed,[f]
Ere like sheep we went astray;
They (said God) shall call me Father,
Nor from me shall turn away.[g]

CHORUS.

Abba, Father, &c.

And the richest stores of pardon,
God sets forth in Christ his Son,[h]

---

[a] "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God"—1 John iii. 1.

[b] "Since thou wast precious in my sight thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee and people for thy life"—Isa. xliii. 4.

[c] "That he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word"—John xvii. 2—6.

[d] "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth"—Isa. xlii. 1. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"—Matt. iii. 17.

[e] "But I said, how shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? And I said, thou shalt call me, my Father! and shalt not turn away from me"—Jer. iii. 19.

[f] "Listen, O isles, unto me, and hearken ye people from far! The Lord hath called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name; and said unto me, thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified"—Isa. xlix. 1—3.

[g] "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me"—Jer. xxxii. 40.

[h] "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God"—Rom. iii. 25.

With the Spirit's grace to guide us,[a]
Safe to bring his children home.[b]
Abba, Father! makes all certain,[c]
Both by word, by oath, and blood;[d]
Abba saith they are my people,
And they say—the Lord's my God![e]

CHORUS.

Abba, Father, &c.

Hence through all our changing seasons,[f]
Trouble, sorrow, sickness, woe;
Nothing changeth God's affection,[g]
Abba's love will bring us through.[h]
Soon shall all thy blood-bought children
Round thy throne their anthems raise;[i]
And in songs of rich salvation,
Shout to Abba endless praise.[k]

---

[a] "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God"—Rom. viii. 14.

[b] "Howbeit when he the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth"—John xvi. 13.

[c] "Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation and all my desire, although he make it not to grow"—2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

[d] "Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us"—Heb. vi. 17, 18. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus"—Heb. x. 19.

[e] "They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, it is my people; and they shall say, the Lord is my God"—Zech. xiii. 9.

[f] "That no man should be moved by these afflictions, for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto"—1 Thess. iii. 3. "Wherein we greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations"—1 Peter i. 6.

[g] "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed"—Mal. iii. 6.

[h] "And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me"—2 Cor. xii. 9.

[i] "And they sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"—Rev. v. 9.

[k] "Saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the

CHORUS.

Abba, Father, &c.

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## II.

### THE RUACH HYMN, OF PRAISE AND SUPPLICATION TO GOD THE HOLY GHOST.

Ruach Jehovah ! glorious Lord,[a]
Vouchsafe thy presence with thy word,[b]
To all thy church around :[c]
Lord ! give to each of thine now here,[d]
The seeing eye, the hearing ear,[e]
To know the joyful sound ![f]
Without renewings of thy grace,[g]
To see God's glory in Christ's face,[h]

---

earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them heard I saying, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever"—Rev. v. 12, 13.

[a] "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord"—Isa. xi. 2. "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders"—Exod. xv. 11.

[b] "And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present to heal them"—Luke v. 17.

[c] "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him"—Psalm lxxxix. 7.

[d] "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, it is my people; and they shall say, the Lord is my God"—Zech. xiii. 9. "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world"—John xiv. 22.

[e] "The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them"—Prov. xx. 12.

[f] "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance"—Psalm lxxxix. 15.

[g] "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost"—Titus iii. 5.

[h] "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"—2 Cor. iv. 6.

And manifest the Lord ;[a]
Our ordinance will barren prove,[b]
Not one will taste of Jesu's love,[c]
Or savour in thy word.[d]
Oh ! Ruach ! on Christ's garden blow,[e]
And cause the spices all to flow,
As grace for grace each suits ;[f]
For then will our Beloved come,
Into this garden of his own ;[g]
And eat his pleasant fruits.

'Tis thine, O Lord, in blessing thus,
To take of Christ's and shew to us,
Of him, and his, impart ;[h]
And thine no less the same to prove,
And shed abroad the Father's love,[i]
In each renewed heart ;

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[a] "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you"—John xiv. 26.

[b] "And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above ; but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, thus saith the Lord God ; come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live"—Ezek. xxxvii. 8, 9.

[c] "Nevertheless I tell you the truth ; it is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on me ; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more : of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged"—John xvi. 7—11.

[d] "Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee"—Song i. 3. "I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered ; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen"—Ezek. xx. 41.

[e] "Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south ; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits"—Song iv. 16.

[f] "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace"—John i. 16.

[g] "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse ; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice ; I heave eaten my honeycomb with my honey ; I have drunk my wine with my milk ; eat, O friends ; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved"—Song v. 1. &c.

[h] "He shall glorify me ; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you"—John xvi. 14.

[i] "And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us"—Rom. v. 5.

'Tis thine in pray'r to help complaints,[a]
To quicken sinners, comfort saints,[b]
And weary souls refresh ;[c]
The heart of stone to take away,
(Lord ! there are many here this day,)[d]
Oh ! give them hearts of flesh !
Almighty Lord ! let all around,
In sweet communion now abound,[e]
With God, and God's dear Son ;[f]
If thou wilt open to our view
The love of each and draw us too,[g]
Then will our hearts be won.[h]

Sweet Comforter ! do thou behold,
The little ones of Jesu's fold,[i]
With special grace this day ;[k]

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[a] "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought ; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot he uttered"—Rom. viii. 26.

[b] "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins"—Eph. ii. 1. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth ; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you"—John xiv. 16—18.

[c] "For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul"—Jer. xxxi. 25.

[d] "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh"—Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

[e] "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost"—Rom. xv. 13.

[f] "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us ; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ"—1 John i. 3.

[g] "Draw me, we will run after thee ; the king hath brought me into his chambers : we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine ; the upright love thee"—Song i. 4.

[h] "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning ; thou hast the dew of thy youth"—Psalm cx. 3.

[i] "Fear not, little flock ; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"—Luke xii. 32.

[k] "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days, so shall thy strength be"—Deut. xxxiii. 25.

That all thy children taught of thee,[a]
May have their portion full and free,[b]
And none go lean away.[c]
Then will loud praises through our host,[d]
To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
By ev'ry tongue be giv'n;[e]
And each will say in godly fear,
'This is God's house—the Lord is here,[f]
And this the gate of heaven.'
And daily till our Lord shall come,[g]
To take his whole redeemed home,[h]
With him, for ever then;[i]
The Lord send blessings from above,[k]
The Father's, Son's, and Spirit's love
Be with us all amen.[l]

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[a] "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children"—Isa. liv. 13.

[b] "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot"—Psalm xvi. 5.

[c] "O let not the oppressed return ashamed; let the poor and needy praise thy name"—Psalm lxxiv. 21.

[d] "Praise him upon the loud cymbals; praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath, praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord"—Psalm cl. 5, 6.

[e] "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever"—Rev. v. 13.

[f] "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, how dreadful is this place, this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven"—Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.

[g] "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"—John xiv. 3.

[h] "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord"—2 Cor. v. 8.

[i] "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord"—1 Thess. iv. 17.

[k] "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"—James i. 17.

[l] "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen"—2 Cor. xiii. 14.

## III.

### CORPUS CHRISTI HYMN, WITH NOTES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church"—Eph. v. 28, 29.

When first at God's command,
The church came up to view,
In his eternal mind,[a]
Chosen in Christ and true,[b]
The Father gave her to his Son,[c]
And Christ betroth'd her for his own.[d]

But when in after day,[e]
She brake his holy word,
And as a treach'rous wife,
Departed from her Lord :[f]
He brought her back, tho' hell withstood,[g]
And washed her sins in his own blood.[h]

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[a] "Thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant, with my holy oil have I anointed him"—Psalm lxxxix. 19, 20. "Jude the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called"—Jude 1.

[b] "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love"—Eph. i. 4.

[c] "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me"—John xvii. 6.

[d] "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in tender mercies"—Hosea ii. 19.

[e] "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat"—Gen. iii. 6.

[f] "Surely as a wife treacherously departed from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord"—Jer. iii. 20.

[g] "And he shewed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him"—Zech. iii. 1.

[h] "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood"—Rev. i. 5.

And now renewed by grace,
And sav'd from hell and sin,
She learns by daily proof,[a]
Her daily need of him ;[b]
Taught by the Spirit to confess,
The Lord her only righteousness.[c]

Yea, more to crown the whole,
And God's decrees to prove ;
Her marriage form'd ere time,
Eternity can't move,[d]
Her everlasting song is this :
"Jesus is mine, and I am his."[e]

Yes! we are one (she cries)
'Midst all my lep'rous state ;[f]
And no man ever yet
Was known his flesh to hate,
And I'm his flesh, our oneness proves ;
In loving me himself he loves.[g]

Nor can he cease to love,[h]
'Tis Jesu's precept this,

---

[a] "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost"—Titus iii. 5.

[b] "I am the vine, ye are the branches : he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing"—John xv. 5.

[c] "And this is his name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness"—Jer. xxiii. 6.

[d] "According to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord"—Eph. iii. 11.

[e] "My beloved is mine, and I am his; he feedeth among the lilies"—Song ii. 16.

[f] "That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us : that the world may believe that thou hast sent me"—John xvii. 21.

[g] "So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies ; he that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church"—Eph. v. 28, 29.

[h] "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty ; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy ; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing"—Zeph. iii. 17.

"Ye husbands love your wives,"
And will not Christ love his ?[a]
Shall others cherish and refresh,
And Jesus hide from his own flesh ?[b]

Oh ! no, Christ loves his church ;[c]
His glory 'tis to bless ;
He cannot love her more,
Nor will he love her less :[d]
In his sight fair, cleans'd by his word,[e]
A bride adorned for her Lord.[f]

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## IV.

### THE MAGDALENE.

The child of sin and woe,
Ah ! whither shall I flee ?
To what kind bosom go
To tell my misery ?
For none will see,
But all agree
To frown on me—
A Magdalene !

---

[a] "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it"—Eph. v. 25.

[b] "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house ? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh"—Isa. lviii. 7.

[c] "Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner, and fellow-helper concerning you ; or our brethren be inquired of, they are the messengers of the churches and the glory of Christ"—2 Cor. viii. 23.

[d] "I have loved thee with an everlasting love"—Jerem. xxxi. 3. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever"—Heb. xiii. 8.

[e] "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee"—Song vi. 7. "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word"—Eph. v. 26.

[f] "And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband—Rev. xxi. 2.

My father !—Ah ! no more
His home or love I know ;
He spurn'd me from his door,
And gave me up to woe !
He'll not relent,
Though penitent,
My heart is bent—
A Magdalene !

The grave—the only end
To sorrow's heavy load !
Death is indeed a friend
To them at peace with God !
But grace must be
First given, and free ;
There's none for me—
A Magdalene !

I've heard of Jesu's name,
Who on the gospel day,
Received all that came,
Nor turned a wretch away.
Though all forbear,
Will Jesus hear
In earnest prayer—
A Magdalene ?

Methinks I feel a ray
Of hope arising round ;
Some angel points the way—
'Here's an asylum found !'
What's this I see ?
And can it be
Inviting me—
A Magdalene !

And will you, can you take
A wretch like me within ?
Will you, for Jesu's sake,
Help me to flee from sin ?
Oh ! love divine !
For grace to shine
On guilt like mine—
A Magdalene !

Here then in this retreat,
My soul shall wait and pray;
Nor rise from Jesu's feet,
Till sin be put away.
Jesus will hear
And answer pray'r;
And say, 'lo here—
A Magdalene!'

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## V.

### UNION TO CHRIST.

"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones"—
Eph. v. 30.

How precious that truth to my soul,
That Christ and his people are one;
He the life-giving head to the whole,
They members, and bone of his bone.
An union so firm and so sure,
Not Satan nor sin can undo;
In Jesus the whole is secure,
'Cause he lives, they shall live too.

This union brings with it all bliss,
Secur'd as it is by Christ's pow'rs;
We take part in all that is his,
And Jesus in all that is our's.
Hence I, a poor creature so mean,
And in myself nothing but sin,
In Jesus am perfectly clean,
And holy and righteous in him.

Moreover, his love is so meet,
'Tis human, 'tis also divine;
I call it 'tis Jesu's-love sweet,
Which flows from his heart into mine.
Not the love of the Godhead alone,
Nor that only human in heart;
But the union of both, forming one,
In the person of Christ to impart.

To have this from others none can,
To angels 'twere folly to go ;
They know not the feelings of man,
They've felt not what means human woe.
But Jesus both knows and hath felt,
What marks all our sorrows and fears,
When here in his flesh he once dwelt,
And offered strong cryings and tears.

Ye children of God and the Lamb,
Remember when sorrows press sore,
Your Jesus did once feel the same,
When conflicts and trials he bore.
And still his redeemed should know,
He's Jesus the same in his love ;
The foot can't be crushed below,
And the head be unconscious above !

And what a sweet thought for to bear,
By all where his grace he hath giv'n,
His poorest on earth is as dear
To him as his greatest in heav'n :
The merits and worth of his blood
Are equal below and above ;
As soon might he cease to be God,
As Jesus might cease in his love.

Great Father of mercies, we bow
With thanks for our headship above ;
Nor less, Holy Spirit, do thou
Accept of our praise for thy love !
To the three glorious persons in God,
Whose sov'reignty all shall adore ;
Through Christ, and by faith in his blood,
Be glory and praise evermore !

## VI.

### THE AMEN HYMN, WITH NOTES FROM SCRIPTURE.

We bless thee, O thou great Amen![a]
Jehovah's pledge to sinful men,[b]
Confirming all his word;[c]
No promises are doubtful then,
For all are yea and all amen,
In Jesus Christ our Lord.[d]

CHORUS.

Secur'd in this the church on high,
And all below unceasing cry
Amen! Amen! Amen![e]
To thee, O Lord! all praise is given,
The loud response of earth and heaven;
All hail thou great Amen![f]

Sweet ordinance of God to bless,[g]
By him the Lord our righteousness,[h]
By *him*, I say again;[i]

---

[a] "And unto the church of the Laodiceans write, these things saith the Amen"—Rev. iii. 14.

[b] "Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David"—Psalm lxxxix. 35.

[c] "And they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen"—Mark xvi. 20.

[d] "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen"—2 Cor. i. 20.

[e] "After this I beheld, and lo! a great multitude which no man could number of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and worshipped God, saying Amen"—Rev. vii. 9, 12.

[f] "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, blessing, honour, glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen"—Rev. v. 13, 14.

[g] That Amen is among the ordinances of God is evident, being the constant response to the service of God both in the church above and below. And the Spirit's blessing the church is to be answered, Amen. Else when thou shalt bless with the Spirit, how shall he which occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest"—1 Cor. xiv. 16.

[h] "In his day Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness"—Jer. xxiii. 6.

[i] "And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to recon-

This *mighty Him* makes all things sure,[a]
Through life, in death, and evermore,[b]
In him, the great Amen.

CHORUS.

Secur'd in this, the church, &c.

O faithful witness of our God,[c]
Who came by water and by blood,[d]
Proving the Holy One![e]
Thy record must for ever stand,
Of life eternal from God's hand,[f]
And all in thee his Son.

CHORUS.

Secur'd in this, the church, &c.

Sweetly thy Verilys we hear,[g]
For God's Amen dispels all fear,[h]
Thy faithfulness it proves;[i]

---

cile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven"—Coloss. i. 20.

[a] This mighty Him. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on the earth, even in him"—Eph. i. 10

[b] "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"—Rom viii. 38, 39.

[c] "Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness"—Rev. i. 6. Isa. lv. 4. Rev. iii. 14.

[d] "This is he who came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ"—1 John v. 6.

[e] "Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel"—Isa. xlviii. 17, &c.

[f] "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life"—1 John v. 11, 12.

[g] "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life"—John v. 24. And in numberless other places through the gospel, we find the Lord's verilys.

[h] "Fear not little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"—Luke xii. 32.

[i] "The faithful God"—Deut. vii. 9. "He abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself"—2 Tim. ii. 13.

And while such grace from God is shewn,
To God's Amen we had our own,
Our so be it God loves.[a]

CHORUS.
Secur'd in this, the church, &c.

Ye saints of God, in age or youth,[b]
Who swear by him the God of truth,[c]
By him I say again;
Make him whom God hath made to you[d]
Your Alpha and Omega too,[e]—
God's Christ is your Amen.[f]

CHORUS.
Secur'd in this, the church, &c.

Nor less above ye heav'nly host[g]
To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,[h]
Give praise, thro' him with men;[i]

---

[a] "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever. Amen"—Rom. ix. 5. "And let all the people say, Amen"—Psalm cvi. 48.

[b] "Both young men and maidens, old men and children, let them praise the name of the Lord"—Psalm clxviii. 12, 13. And a voice came out of the throne saying, praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great"—Rev. xix. 5.

[c] "That he who blessed himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth, shall swear by the God of truth"—Isa. lxv. 16.

[d] "But of him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption"—1 Cor. i. 30.

[e] "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last"—Rev. xxii. 13.

[f] "The Christ of God"—Luke ix. 20.

[g] "And I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, hallelujah! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God"—Rev. xix. 1.

[h] "For there are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these Three are One"—1 John v. 7.

[i] "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father"—Eph. ii. 18. John xiv. 27.

For of him, thro' him, by him, sure[a]
The church shall glory evermore,[b]
In him the great Amen.[c]

CHORUS.

Secur'd in this, the church, &c.

---

a "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen"—Rom xii. 36.

b "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory"—Isa. xlv. 25.

c "And unto the church of the Laodiceans write, these things saith the Amen"—Rev. viii. 14.

END OF VOLUME X

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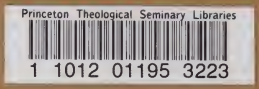
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